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Fifty-first Session

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Friday, 25 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 49

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The Acting President: I should like to inform representatives that, following consultations on this item, and taking into consideration General Assembly decision 50/406 of 31 October 1995, it is proposed that the General Assembly decide to postpone consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): While my delegation has no wish to comment on the way the Acting President has guided us, I should like to voice our concern over the item before us, which has been persistently postponed without clearly stated reasons being given to the General Assembly.

If I may request the courtesy of the presidency on behalf of my delegation, I would suggest that reasons be given so that, as delegates representing Member States, we will be in a position to know what to report back to our Governments. During our last report we mentioned the same thing — that the issue had been postponed. Without clarification, however, this is frustrating for our participation, especially since the item was included by the General Committee in the agenda for the Assembly's consideration.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has taken note of the statement of the representative of Swaziland.

May I take it that the Assembly, taking into account decision 50/406, wishes to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 49.

Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/402)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.6)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.6.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It is a pleasure for me to be the first speaker at this morning's meeting to address agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", and to introduce a draft resolution on behalf of the co-sponsors, whose number is steadily

96-86627 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

increasing. This draft resolution is contained in document A/51/L.6.

In commemorating the agreement reached and signed between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on 24 July 1996, the General Assembly today marks an important stage in its cooperation with international organizations. This is a very important step which the General Assembly mandated the Secretary-General to carry out in resolution 50/15 of 15 November 1995, in order to establish cooperation in all fields and to promote fundamental human rights and freedoms.

I can only thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the Secretary-General of the IPU, Mr. Pierre Cornillon, for their joint efforts and for the efforts of their staff, which were crowned with the effective implementation of the clauses of this agreement between the two organizations.

The conclusion of this agreement is a cornerstone in the edifice of consolidating fruitful and beneficial cooperation between our two organizations. It lays the foundations for the formal framework for this cooperation, which should be promoted by expanding its scope and content. We are very pleased that this agreement has been reached. It is an agreement that provides for cooperation and consultation between the organizations as they discharge their mandates.

The participation of the United Nations in the various forums of the IPU is incontrovertible. In addition to their participation in the New York meeting convened to follow up the World Summit for Social Development and jointly organized by the IPU pursuant to the conclusion of the agreement that we are commemorating today, their participation was inaugurated by sending representatives of the Secretary-General to the ninety-fifth and ninety-sixth Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, held in Istanbul and Beijing. I should also mention the meetings that took place very recently between the two Secretaries-General and the policy makers of their secretariats.

All this opens the door to very promising prospects for cooperation which will further foster the lofty objectives and purposes of both organizations. We hope that this across-the-board cooperation in all fields will grow, so as to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in achieving its purposes under the Charter. These purposes can be furthered through the support rendered by the IPU, which can also play an extremely important role in promoting international peace and cooperation.

I would like to conclude by expressing Egypt's gratitude to the current President of the IPU, who was the main architect in the development of this cooperation agreement between organizations that have similar missions and principles.

On behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution set out in document A/51/L.6, and the countries that subsequently joined them, I would like to present the various provisions of this draft resolution to the General Assembly.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly recalls that it requested the Secretary-General to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU and stresses its desire to strengthen existing cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU and to give it a new and adequate framework.

In the operative portion of the draft resolution, the General Assembly welcomes the conclusion on 24 July 1996 of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU, considers that the signature of the agreement constitutes an important step for increased and strengthened cooperation between the two organizations, decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-second session on various aspects of cooperation that have taken place between the United Nations and the IPU in implementation of the cooperation agreement.

In view of the procedural and ceremonial nature of the draft resolution, and given the lack of any financial programme implications, I would propose, on behalf of all the co-sponsors, that the General Assembly adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Yusof (Singapore): Since this is the first time that I am speaking here during this session, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Razali Ismail on his election as President and to take this opportunity to express my delegation's satisfaction at the manner in which he has steered the course of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly thus far. I have no doubt that he will continue to acquit himself honourably and with his own exemplary personal style of the responsibilities thrust upon him. On a more personal note, it gives me great pleasure to see a friend of Singapore presiding over the Assembly. I would assure

him of the full support of the Singapore delegation and that he can call upon us for any assistance that he may require in the conduct of the affairs of the fifty-first session of the Assembly and throughout the term of his presidency.

Last year, on 15 November 1995, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 50/15, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". That resolution was introduced by Mr. Nabil Elaraby of the Arab Republic of Egypt and sponsored by no less than 62 Member States. Today, we have learned that the number of sponsors of this year's draft resolution has increased.

In adopting that resolution the Member States of the United Nations recognized that national parliamentarians, through the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), share common objectives with the United Nations and that the IPU can play a crucial role in promoting the work and goals of the Organization.

My delegation views it as timely that the IPU, with its membership of no less than 133 national Parliaments, should seek closer participation with the United Nations. The ties between the two organizations, particularly in the areas of peace, human rights and democracy, date back to the establishment of the United Nations itself. On the basis of the shared objectives of the United Nations and the IPU, closer cooperation can only facilitate the work of parliamentarians and empower the work of the United Nations.

The key to cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is complementarity. The United Nations is not a world Government. After all, its mandates are determined and its resources furnished by its Member States. Yet the United Nations has successfully established international law and set international standards and programmes in almost every field of human conduct.

However, sovereign power remains with sovereign nation States. The members of the IPU decide for their respective nations whether to assume binding international obligations and how to implement, nationally, the decisions that States have taken at the international level.

The task of exercising sovereign power should, and rightly, be exercised only by the parliamentarians, that is, by men and women elected by the people of each nation, men and women who are in direct contact with the general population, who are in touch with their shared aspirations and who understand their common interests.

This goes back to the original purpose of the United Nations, for the Charter of the United Nations begins with the preambular words:

"We the peoples of the United Nations ...".

Increased participation and collaboration with the IPU would therefore make the United Nations more representative, as the Parliaments represent the will of the people of every nation.

My delegation is of the view that it is only through a gainful collaborative relationship between the United Nations and the IPU that the will of the people can be better expressed at the international level through the United Nations and that, conversely, through the IPU, the voice of the inter-governmental process can be disseminated at the grass-roots level. In effect, it is a win-win situation.

In preparing the United Nations for the twenty-first century, a fundamental issue that has to be resolved is the United Nations financial problem. It has been repeated time and again that the key reason for that problem is the failure of some Member States to pay their dues in full and on time.

One reason that has been offered for the inability of Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations is that domestic political bodies do not support their current share of the United Nations budget.

It is therefore good for the United Nations to bring the parliamentarians on board. The active participation of parliamentarians is needed to relay and explain to the public the issues involved, which would be helpful in garnering popular support for international action. This would address the problem of justifying the resources needed for international cooperation.

My delegation has therefore noted with pleasure that the Secretary-General's report submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/15 informs us that a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU was signed on 24 July 1996. My delegation welcomes the conclusion of that agreement, which formalizes the framework for effective cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

The effectiveness of the cooperation agreement has already been evidenced by the fact that a list has been drawn up of the concrete steps and actions to be taken by

the members of the IPU as a follow-up to the implementation of the decisions and recommendations adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, which was held at Copenhagen in March 1995.

We are about to embark on a new century, one in which a borderless world will not be a mere catchphrase. As the representative of my Parliament to the Assembly, it is a personal pleasure for me to be here today to witness the formalization of the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

The formalization of this relationship reflects a reaffirmation of the IPU's belief that the United Nations and its organs are responsible for and capable of creating a better world for tomorrow. It is a reaffirmation of the belief that multilateral cooperation is a necessity and that it is in the self-interest of all States to resolve the challenges that threaten all humankind.

I am grateful to have been given this opportunity to express the view of the Republic of Singapore that formalization of the old, but tried and true, relationship between the IPU and the United Nations brings with it the hopes for the future of the peoples of the world: peace, justice, equality and the dignity of all humankind.

Mr. Pelufo (Uruguay) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is an honour for me to address this Assembly on agenda item 29, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

Permit me first to express my country's great interest in this matter. Uruguay has supported from the outset the inclusion of this item on the agendas both of the General Assembly and of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We believe that two institutions as important as these in today's world cannot work alone or apart from their respective activities for peace, democracy, human rights and the development of peoples. On the contrary, they must join their efforts so that these purposes and goals may be achieved as quickly and efficiently as possible.

My delegation recognizes the contribution made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/51/402) and welcomes the results of the cooperation agreement signed by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 24 July this year. The agreement strengthens relations between the two organizations and greatly facilitates activities complementary mutually and allows the organizations to cooperate more closely in joint efforts in specific areas of their activities for the benefit of mankind. We are convinced that the link that has been forged through this agreement will also make it possible for the world Organization of Governments and the world organization of parliaments to maintain substantive cooperation and in this way better express the will of peoples at the international level.

As a result of this agreement as well as through the political will displayed by many Governments and intergovernmental organizations, my delegation wishes to highlight the convening of a meeting on the follow-up activities to the World Summit for Social Development, with the purpose of expanding cooperation among Parliaments, Governments and intergovernmental organizations in order to implement effectively the results of the World Summit for Social Development.

The convening of this meeting on 5 and 6 September, as well as of others which may take place for the attainment of the same goals, will contribute to a better implementation of the principles and precepts of the United Nations Charter and of other instruments of international law and policy.

Bringing national parliaments closer is a way of reaching out to the ordinary citizen in order to achieve an exchange of ideas and contributions which would otherwise be difficult. The former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay and current President of the Inter-American Development Bank, Mr. Enrique Iglesias, stated years ago that

> "Parliament in this regard is key because it expresses the voices of the parties; and together with them public opinion, the media, and professional and technical circles are heard. In this way, one can articulate a highly unified foreign policy."

It is with this conviction that my country has a coherent foreign policy, where the major principles and themes that guide the conduct of our country abroad are shared by all actors in the national political arena. This, in my country's view, also takes place in a forum such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which expresses and deliberates the positions of the vast majority of the world's political forces.

At the regional and subregional levels, the parliamentary delegations of my country have followed and continue to follow with particular interest the treatment of items addressed by the Latin American

Parliament, which is presided over at present by a Uruguayan legislator. This matter has also been under consideration in MERCOSUR, the common market of the South, which through the Protocol of Ouro Preto, created as one of its bodies a joint parliamentary commission. This is the body which represents the parliaments of the member States of MERCOSUR.

Whenever the Inter-Parliamentary Union or the United Nations is involved, Uruguay has shown a total commitment to democracy as the way to govern the future of our peoples. As we maintain firmly that the United Nations should achieve innovative ways towards greater democratization of the system, Uruguay, which is a country with deep democratic convictions, is pleased that parliaments can make a contribution, convey their experiences and be one more voice in this concert of the peace and prosperity we all hope for.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) *(interpretation from French)*: The Principality of Andorra has inherited a parliamentary tradition going back more than five centuries. Indeed, the establishment of the *Consell de la Terra*, precursor of our present parliament, the *Consell General*, goes back to 1419. In accordance with this tradition and pursuant to the Constitution of 1993, my country administers its political system through a parliament similar to that of many other democracies. It is therefore natural and necessary for Andorra today to manifest its firmest support of the cooperation agreement signed last 24 July between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). As a sponsor of the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly by Egypt, whom we would like to thank, my country hopes that this cooperation agreement will lead to specific projects and that next year when we again consider this agenda item, we will be able to commend the progress that has been made.

Barely a year ago, the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the Union, meeting in special session at United Nations Headquarters in New York, reaffirmed in its declaration on parliamentary prospects for international community on the eve of the twenty-first century the lofty vision and common goals that inspired the authors of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations Charter is a document of inclusion, aimed at bringing together human beings for the accomplishment of the purposes of peace, respect for human dignity, the exercise of democracy and development.

In this, the assistance of parliamentarians will be valuable. Let us think, for example, of the expertise that could be shared in the promotion and verification of free and regular elections. By uniting the efforts of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we will be sharing a base of information and expertise that will assist us in better identifying problems in certain States in the process of democratizing. Let us recall also the numerous observations made recently at the Beijing meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union regarding the results of the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen.

The Principality of Andorra is particularly interested in this subject since it authored one of the Copenhagen commitments, on inter-generational dialogue. Indeed, since they are in constant contact with the citizens they represent, those who are directly elected will be able to inspire us to put into place specific programmes to combat poverty and social marginalization.

In fact, the positions taken recently by the Inter-Parliamentary Union — on the question of landmines, the role of women in the world, or any other question — directly relate to problems to which the United Nations is particularly devoted. Thus, we must cooperate, share, and help each other.

We are sometimes discouraged to see that United Nations activities are improperly recognized, poorly appreciated and vilified. The Head of Government of Andorra, Marc Forné, called attention to this a few weeks ago during the general debate. Moreover, as the president of our Parliament, Joseph Dalleres, noted last year in this Hall, during his address to deputies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, our venal world always focuses on the "dark spots". Working to improve communications will help enhance the view taken of the United Nations. It goes without saying that cooperation and the exchange of information with the world's parliaments, through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, is a means of providing a better understanding of the Organization. The 24 July agreement should therefore be fully implemented.

Andorra, even though a very old country, is a new member of the United Nations and of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and it is with the ardour of a newcomer that we are encouraging cooperation between the two organizations. We did this last year, through a unanimous decision of our Parliament and the active participation of our Government, following the Madrid Conference. I can assure the Assembly that we will continue such efforts.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international parliamentary organization representing the parliaments of sovereign States, has traversed a course of more than 100 years. It now has 135 members and enjoys certain influence in the world. Its twice-yearly meetings in particular provide a forum for exchanging views and enhancing friendship and are thus widely accepted and welcomed by parliamentarians from all over the world.

In September this year, the IPU held its ninety-sixth session, at Beijing, at the invitation of the Chinese parliamentary delegation, the first ever held in China. The National People's Congress of China and the Chinese Government attached great importance to the meeting and made careful preparations and arrangements for it. These contributed to the complete success of the meeting and won wide acclaim from participants and others concerned. This is another important contribution that the National People's Congress has made to the IPU since it joined in 1984.

During the Beijing meeting, parliamentarians conducted full discussions and consultations on questions concerning the international political situation, world economic development and the social progress of mankind. They exchanged views and adopted relevant resolutions on the basis of mutual respect and seeking common ground while putting aside differences. Most representatives were of the view that mankind is faced with a common challenge in the wake of drastic changes in the world situation. Peace and development remain the two major issues in today's world. Countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community and are entitled to participate in international affairs on an equal footing. Respect for human rights should first ensure the right to subsistence and development. Many representatives also condemned hegemonism and power politics in their statements, and criticized the hegemonic practice of wilfully imposing sanctions against other countries.

Thanks to the vigorous participation and efforts of all representatives, in one week the meeting yielded fruitful results and achieved complete success. It played a positive role in strengthening inter-parliamentary understanding and cooperation, enhancing friendship among the peoples of all countries and promoting world peace and development. It is particularly worth mentioning that the session also helped enhance the understanding of China by parliamentarians of other counties, who saw for themselves the tremendous changes in China since the reform and opening-up, as well as the great progress the Chinese people have made in a short span of some 10 years.

The IPU is also committed to strengthening cooperation with the United Nations while playing a positive role in safeguarding world peace and promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation. The IPU Statute states explicitly that the IPU shares the objectives of the United Nations, supports its efforts and closely cooperates with it.

We are pleased to note that here at United Nations Headquarters, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, joined with Mr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in signing a cooperation agreement. This was a major event in the annals of the development of the IPU as well as a starting point for cooperation between the most representative and authoritative intergovernmental international organization and the most representative inter-parliamentary international organization of sovereign States. We hope that on the basis of the agreement and through the efforts of the two organizations, the United Nations and the Governments of its Member States will be able to listen to the voices of more parliamentarians and thereby reflect the wishes of all peoples in a more comprehensive manner. We hope as well that the IPU will be able to better use its influence and role, to translate more requests and desires into practice. As the largest developing country in the world, a permanent member of the Security Council and an active participant in the activities of the IPU, China is ready to contribute its share to this end.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". My delegation is convinced that it will further promote the strengthening of cooperative relations between the two organizations by creating an effective framework of mutual cooperation. We look forward to its adoption by consensus in the General Assembly. I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Egyptian delegation for the leading role it has played in drafting this important resolution.

Built as cornerstones of democracy, national parliaments have continually expanded their role in foreign affairs. In the past, their primary responsibilities

in that field were for the ratification of international conventions and the approval of the national diplomacy budget. However, the increasing complexity of global relations has made their participation in the international policy-making arena all the more relevant.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has become a focal point for national parliaments to enhance and coordinate endeavours towards the goals of the United Nations. The current memberships of the United Nations and the IPU — 185 and 135 respectively — represent a tremendous source of leadership and potential towards the promotion of international peace, security and democracy.

Since its inception in 1889, long before that of the United Nations, the IPU has upheld the principles of representative democracy and has been an ardent promoter of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Today, in the context of the new world order and a continually evolving international reality, it is imperative that the IPU and the United Nations further consolidate their alliance to address together the challenges of a newly emerging global agenda.

The declaration on "The parliamentary vision for international cooperation into the twenty-first century", adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council during its special session last year on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, provides an effective analysis of the problems facing the United Nations in the forthcoming century and prescribes pragmatic measures by which the two international organizations together can overcome them.

The United Nations is often likened to the parliament of the world. Indeed, both the United Nations and national parliaments share the common characteristics of representativeness, and their actions are determined by deliberation, consultation, negotiation and, ultimately, legislation.

The institutionalization of a partnership between the United Nations and the IPU will undoubtedly serve to further the laudable goals that the two organizations have long stood for and continue to advocate. Moreover, closer cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU should encourage national parliaments to support the activities of the United Nations and to fulfil at the national level their responsibilities towards those goals. Obviously, the programmes and initiatives of the United Nations can only be effective with the concerted support and cooperation of the national parliaments of Member States.

The cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU concluded in July of this year marks a milestone in the translation of cooperative spirit into tangible results. As the Secretary-General accurately noted in his report (A/51/402), the agreement will substantially facilitate

> "their effective exercise of mutually complementary activities." *(A/51/402, para. 5)*

Indeed, regular consultations and the active exchange of information resources will permit the initiation of joint projects and programmes by which to promote the principles enshrined in the Charter. The agreement should also advance the participation of the IPU in the activities of the various organs of the United Nations.

It was not long after the signing of the agreement that tangible signs of United Nations-IPU cooperation began to emerge. For example, this past September, the IPU, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development jointly organized a meeting in New York on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. This meeting proved that close tripartite consultation and cooperation among parliaments, Governments and intergovernmental organizations is essential to turn summit-level agreements into working realities.

Recognizing the increasingly important role of the IPU in world affairs, and as a reaffirmation of my country's commitment to the IPU's activities, the Republic of Korea will host the ninety-seventh Inter-Parliamentary Conference this coming April in Seoul. In this connection, the Conference Organizing Committee has set the wheels in motion with supra-partisan participation and, vested with the nationwide support of the Korean people, is determined to ensure that the Seoul IPU Conference is the most successful ever.

However, the ninety-seventh Inter-Parliamentary Conference can only be considered a complete success if the full participation of all Member States is assured. In this regard, I wish to emphasize that the Seoul Conference is open to all IPU member countries, irrespective of race, ideology or political orientation. I urge every member country to attend and to help further promote the long sought-after goals and aspirations of humankind.

In conclusion, convinced that effective, ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is fundamental to the achievement of the foregoing common objectives, my delegation looks forward to the annual inclusion of this item in the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this agenda item now be closed.

If there is no objection, the list of speakers will now be closed.

It was so decided.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: It gives me great pleasure to speak today on the item dealing with cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The institutionalization of the links between the universal Organization and the organization that represents elected officials of the various peoples of the world is, first and foremost, a tribute to a prestigious institution established more than a century ago. Despite the upheavals that have shaken our era, it has been able, above all, to consolidate its foundations and increase its scope by now bringing together the elected representatives of almost all Member States of the United Nations.

Making relations between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union official is also a recognition of the role which the IPU can play through the elected officials of peoples in the promoting the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations in order to bring about a *rapprochement* between nations, improved understanding among peoples and the consolidation of democracy within States.

The cooperation that we would like to see established between the two organizations can only be beneficial and serve the interests of all our nations.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union with its democratic and representative mission, will bring a new awareness to the activities of the organization, enrich its deliberations and broaden the prospects for global thinking within the United Nations system.

In that connection, I would like to endorse the position expressed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the signature ceremony of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

With respect to the contribution the international community is entitled to expect from the institutionalization of the links between the two organizations, the Secretary-General underscored the role that the Inter-Parliamentary Union could play alongside the United Nations, especially in the interest of peace, human rights and democracy.

For its part, Tunisia welcomes the first concrete steps taken in terms of cooperation between the two organizations, through the participation of the United Nations at the ninety-fifth Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held in Istanbul in April 1996. Also welcoming this cooperation, the Secretary-General stated that parliamentarians play an essential role in the service of the United Nations Charter and that they are the best illustration of the phrase, "We the peoples of the United Nations".

Still in the context of cooperation, I wish to mention the meeting organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the United Nations Secretariat, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme in the framework of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. That meeting, held in New York last September, made it possible to bring together parliamentarians, governmental representatives and governmental organizations for the effective implementation of the results of the Copenhagen Summit.

This approach represents a beginning of the implementation of the ideas underpinning the enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations and has made it possible to identify a set of concrete measures that need to be taken by national parliaments, on the one hand, and by Member States, on the other. We hope this innovative approach will make it possible to implement better the decisions and recommendations adopted at the World Summit.

With respect to the future programme of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Tunisia is of the view that the two organizations must make a common commitment to meet the numerous challenges threatening the stability of our peoples and jeopardizing the ecological balance of our planet. The two organizations must therefore unite their efforts to

overcome underdevelopment, illiteracy, poverty and the over-exploitation of natural resources. Together they must contribute to the building of a freer international community, the establishment on the planet of an era of peace and solidarity and the judicious management of non-renewable natural resources.

The two organizations would thus be able to pave the way to the establishment of democracy, peace and sustainable development. This triad is at the core of the Agenda for Peace, but it is also the key ingredient for the implementation of the Agenda for Development.

In this light, parliamentarians have their share of responsibility for implementing these principles at the national and international levels. This is the fundamental concern of all constitutional institutions and the Tunisian representative bodies that took a united approach to promoting Tunisia's process of renewal this decade.

Without a doubt, parliamentarians are duty-bound to contribute to defining a world of tomorrow in which respect for the human person and his or her fundamental rights, guaranteed by the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is more widespread than it is today.

In accordance with this approach, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali made a solemn commitment in favour of democracy by stating,

> "Democracy is a strategic choice. Democracy will evolve together today and in harmony with the imperatives of our era, whose names are freedom, human rights and development."

Mr. Escarpeta (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is a great honour and a privilege to address the Assembly on behalf of the Republic of Colombia, especially in view of the importance my country attaches to the item before us today.

We cannot but recognize the effort made by the delegation of Egypt, which has played an essential role in promoting this agreement.

At the last session of the General Assembly, Colombia, on the basis of its conviction of the need and significance of concluding a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), was privileged to one of the countries that sponsored the draft resolution adopted by consensus at the plenary meeting of the Assembly on 15 November 1995.

In its wisdom, the General Assembly considered that the IPU's activities to a considerable extent complemented and supported the work of the United Nations, and therefore the Secretary-General was requested to take the necessary steps to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the two organizations.

Member States have been informed, to their great pleasure, that on 24 July 1996 the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council and the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union signed the important cooperation agreement, in accordance with the mandate contained in resolution 50/15.

Strengthening relations between the two organizations will certainly allow for a more effective implementation of mutually complementary activities, thereby allowing both organizations to cooperate more closely in undertaking joint efforts in their particular areas of competence, which will ultimately result in greater benefit for the community of nations.

The agreement has formalized the close and longstanding bond between the two institutions in various fields and consolidated the ongoing efforts of both organizations for noble causes. In particular, it represents a further harmonizing step in the constant search for an ideal world of development, justice and peace to which we all aspire.

We intend to promote all measures necessary for progressing productively and effectively through exchanges of views, technical cooperation, coordination of measures, consultations, active participation and information and documentation exchanges so as to ensure that the cooperation agreement will benefit from the positive contributions of Member States, and that its final outcome will follow the right course, guided by the destiny of international politics.

We are sure that the common will of our States will stand out as the predominant idea in implementing the agreement, and will gain strength as it becomes part of our sovereign foundations in defence of the principles and parameters of political action inspired by our peoples. Each of us in these two important forums has been entrusted with the task of representing our States, and, as

a result of this mandate, we have an inescapable commitment to work for the success of our endeavours.

The outcome of the development of this agreement will reflect on each of the States Members of the United Nations. In this respect, I am fully convinced that it will result in vigorous action that appropriately interprets international reality and updates necessary mandates to enable both organizations to meet the challenges of the new world order.

The critical situation that exists in the present-day world has shown that the foundations of the new order are not as secure as had mistakenly been claimed. Peoples afflicted by uncertainty are still awaiting the peace and prosperity that they expected as a result of the end of the cold war. Notwithstanding some isolated positive trends, the general picture, especially in developing countries, has deteriorated rather than improved. The marked imbalance between the industrialized North and the impoverished South contrasts with the changes that have occurred in international relations.

Under no circumstances would it be politically justifiable not to promote corrective measures in all areas or to move the United Nations, at an appropriate way, closer to the effective promotion of an alternative model of development so as to ensure compatibility between the required social changes and the current opening up of our economies.

Only a short time after the signing of the Marrakesh agreements, which concluded the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the international trade system has been the object of many unilateral and protectionist actions by certain developed countries. Far from meeting the expectations created with regard to market access, this trend, on the contrary, brings into question the validity and utility of the new multilateral trade system as a foundation stone of the World Trade Organization, and delivers a hard blow to the new system's credibility.

We must add to this situation the many obstacles to access to financial resources, given the firm resistance to the various formulas proposed by the developing countries with regard to the mobilization of essential resources. Over the years, the economic and social institutions of the United Nations have become weaker, increasingly reflecting a reduced capacity to make concrete proposals to meet the problems of developing countries. This is becoming more and more evident, especially when we recall the ever decreasing political support and the continuing cuts in donor funding, all of which have led to the operational stagnation of these institutions.

International cooperation for development is being progressively weakened because of the many initiatives that some donor countries are tackling with indifference, so that significant cuts in the flow of official development ensue. The volume of development assistance has fallen significantly in recent years, and as a result the developing world is witnessing a painful recession that is affecting a larger percentage of the global population year by year. This is an unjust state of affairs as we move into the new century.

External debt has been overwhelming for many developing countries, and especially for the group of least developed countries, which are sinking under the weight of the obligations they have assumed without finding real solutions to help them overcome the crisis. We must promote concrete initiatives to alleviate this serious problem, and allow those States to overcome the harsh effects now confronting them.

If we wish to realize the dream of the founding fathers of the United Nations and the tenets of the Charter, we must implement relevant measures to take back leadership in international cooperation as it was understood by the founders of the Organization, who realized that development and economic and social progress are the essential foundations of peace and security.

In facing the twenty-first century, we must enable our Organization vigorously to meet the challenges of poverty eradication so that it can bridge, once and for all, the deep gap between rich and poor. It will not be feasible to go on living together under present-day conditions of inequality.

The United Nations today has a commitment to ensure that the hopes and expectations created by the end of the cold war do not become new frustrations for our peoples. We have witnessed with frustration the domination of the nuclear threat in the world. Our countries must wage one final battle to eliminate this daunting threat from the face of the earth. The risk to humankind is too high if it persists. Its elimination, however, would be a permanent legacy to future generations.

The major producers of conventional weapons have increased their sales in developing countries. Such developments require us to promote initiatives to ensure that countries in which arms-producing firms operate adopt the necessary measures to eradicate the illegal traffic in such weapons and to control their commercial flows.

The debate and the search for solutions to these priority issues must also be addressed, as implementation of the cooperation agreement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union develops. It would be particularly significant if, with the bridge that has been laid between the two organizations, the parliaments of developed countries can be made aware of concerns such as those that have been pointed out today, so that they can respond positively in their sphere of competence.

The United Nations needs the support of parliaments. Its noble objectives are more likely to become reality if the world's legislative bodies understand, believe in and fully support its cause, and if they complement and, as appropriate, put into practice measures that require it.

This is a solemn and happy time for the Organization. New and necessary foundations have been laid between two of the world's major collegiate bodies, which have the privilege to have among their ranks enlightened spokespersons from all over the world, which constantly seek the same ideal of harmony and coexistence on the vast and glorious stage formed by all the continents, and which raise their voices in this Hall for the supreme ideal of peace.

It behoves us to continue to search for a new way that replaces confrontation by the search for cooperation as the crux of our actions, based on mutual respect and the defence of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, with the resolute and historic purpose of contributing collectively to strengthening the world on the basis of new and better levels of justice, equity and social development.

As the problems faced in the community of nations seem more acute, solutions become more difficult and the international community trembles at the threat of new confrontations. We are duty bound, energetically and by every possible means, to seek reconciliation among men, dialogue, consensus and concerted action.

It is essential that indissoluble and unshakable unity be maintained as a central feature of our world, our Governments, parliaments and peoples. In this way, common interests will prevail on the international scene, our voice will be heard in the decision-making process, and we will have a vital place in world political development.

We therefore need to reaffirm the points of convergence at the tops of our voices, in order to strengthen our positions so that they carry the weight they deserve in the international community — the weight and the exalted power represented by the voice of 185 countries that make up the membership of this Organization.

I am fully convinced that the common will of the States gathered here will be strengthened through the full implementation of this agreement for the common benefit of all humankind.

The Acting President: Before I proceed, I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Sudan has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed this morning at 11 a.m., may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to including Sudan on the list of speakers?

If I hear no objection, the Assembly will include Sudan on the list of speakers.

It was so decided.

Mrs. Heptulla (India): It is once again a great privilege to speak in support of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. It reminds me of the discussions during the last session when this august Assembly began the process of establishing a framework of cooperation by unanimously endorsing resolution 50/15 on 15 November 1995.

The Secretary-General in his report (A/51/402) has informed us that the modest goal set forth in resolution 50/15 has been met with the conclusion on 24 July 1996 of a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU.

This important initial step has opened up new vistas of cooperation. We need to pool our resources and our experience to devise complementary plans of action to address our common problems. Having had the unique privilege of working in close association with both the organizations - as Human Development Ambassador of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

and as a member of the Executive Committee of the IPU, I realize how essential it is for strong ties of cooperation to exist between the United Nations and the IPU.

Of all the international institutions, the IPU was amongst the first to promote the idea of creating a world organization of nations. It is perhaps one of the world's unique institutions in the sense that its members are drawn from a wide spectrum of legislatures representing various shades of public opinion. They include not only the Government but also the opposition, and thus represent the diverse will of the people in the true sense of the phrase.

The IPU, while striving to promote international peace and development and a better understanding of various problems faced by humanity, works in close cooperation with other international organizations. In its multifarious activities, the IPU has worked in close coordination with the United Nations. A large number of United Nations agencies and subsidiary organs are represented at senior levels in the Union's statutory conferences. Several specialized conferences, on a variety of issues, have also been organized jointly or in close cooperation with United Nations bodies including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others. Meetings to bring together senior United Nations officials and parliamentarians attending the United Nations General Assembly as members of their national delegations are held each year in New York to review major initiatives and programmes of the United Nations.

The IPU members submit to their respective assemblies and Governments the resolutions adopted by the Union and promote their implementation. It is expected that the members of the parliaments attending the IPU conferences will in turn disseminate the discussions and conclusions of the conferences back in their countries and pass these opinions on to the masses. Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU will give a greater opportunity to the United Nations, through the elected representatives, to familiarize the people with its objectives and achievements.

The IPU has been evincing growing interest in various international issues affecting its member countries and their peoples. Two full plenary sessions of the IPU each year are devoted entirely to serious problems and situations confronted by the people in general. The IPU also organizes specialized worldwide or regional conferences and symposiums, aimed at bringing together parliamentarians and experts to study certain specific problems of international security, development, human rights, social affairs, disarmament and so on.

Apart from regular Conferences, which are convened twice a year, the IPU has called special sessions in support of United Nations-sponsored world conferences on various aspects of comprehensive human development. It has lent full support to United Nations programmes and plans of action. Special sessions of the IPU were called to supplement the United Nations efforts at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and at the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in 1995. The member parliaments again met at a special session on 7 September 1995 to offer their support to the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing. All these conferences, held at the initiative of the IPU, indicate the complementarity of focus of the IPU and the United Nations.

Like the United Nations, the welfare and concerns of women has been a matter of special importance for the IPU. India, for its part, has always placed emphasis on this vital social issue. The Indian people, Government and Parliament have highlighted this aspect nationally as well as internationally. As a national commitment, after empowering women at the local level through a constitutional amendment reserving seats for women in local bodies, the Indian Parliament is now considering a bill to reserve 33 per cent of seats in the state legislatures and in the National Parliament.

In the international arena, a special Conference of the IPU, as a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, is being hosted at New Delhi from 14 to 18 February 1997 on the theme "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics". This major Conference will bring together parliamentarians from 136 countries, United Nations agencies, media, non-governmental organizations, academics and activists to fan the flame of equality lit by the United Nations in Mexico and stoked at Nairobi and Beijing. As the Chairperson of the National Steering Committee for this Conference, I take this opportunity to invite you all to attend this event.

The possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU for the common benefit of mankind are enormous. Cooperation between these two organizations is aimed at weaving an everlasting social fabric based on fraternity, equality and liberty for all and

at working jointly to ensure peaceful coexistence for our future generations. It should be not only our endeavour and commitment, but also our duty to strengthen a better and prosperous global society. It is in this context that I commend to this Assembly the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.6.

Mr. Dzassohov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: Many diplomats and parliamentarians were witnesses to and participants in the initiatives that have made today's debate possible. It will undoubtedly go down in the political annals of the modern world as the beginning of a qualitatively new era in the relations between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This prompts us to express our well-deserved thanks to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Mr. Ahmed Fathy Sorour and, of course, Mr. Pierre Cornillon, the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, who is here with us today, for it is precisely their efforts and practical steps that are so greatly appreciated in the national Parliaments of the United Nations Member States.

Allow me to make the following brief comments. First, it has become customary to characterize the post-cold-war period as a movement towards democracy and parliamentarianism. It is precisely in this framework that we are debating the draft resolution before us today, as it is fully consonant with the spirit and will of the peoples of the world.

Secondly, the transition to representative democracy under way in many regions of the world, such as Eastern and Central Europe, my country, the Russian Federation, and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, is gaining momentum and even new experience. In turn, the United Nations and its Secretary-General are encouraging new democracies. We can speak of the timeliness of this direction in United Nations activities because the theoretical conceptualization of the interesting democratization processes sometimes, unfortunately, lag behind modern global political realities.

How do we propose effectively to gather public opinion and to bring the full potential of civil society into play? This is something we all seek. In our view, we can solicit the greater involvement of the representatives of national Parliaments in discussions on major United Nations issues. I am convinced that gathering new experience and enhancing cooperation between legislative and executive authorities are urgent international priorities for the international community.

Thirdly, the issue before the General Assembly is conducive to efforts along the "diplomat-deputy" approach. Speaking in May this year before the National Duma of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali correctly stated that the peoples of the world, and even many politicians, have an incomplete picture of the full spectrum of the issues being addressed by the main international Organization.

For example, they see only episodes of peace-building, but not the rest of the process. Today, when cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is at a new stage of its development, it is extremely important to see high-ranking United Nations Secretariat officials and the heads of diplomatic missions of the members of the international community regularly in the halls and meeting rooms of national parliaments.

Moreover, after each round of general policy discussions — and this is an atmosphere that one finds only here at United Nations headquarters — the heads of delegations could address national parliaments on their outcome.

Fourthly, the delegation of the Russian Federation particularly supports and welcomes paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/51/L.6 on the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly of an item concerning cooperation between the two organizations. However, we ourselves — parliamentarians, the Executive Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Council — can and must do a great deal to make future deliberations productive and to consolidate the breakthrough in cooperation between legislators and diplomats.

Fifthly, at every stage of promoting the idea of cooperation in the form now being discussed by the General Assembly, Russia, and particularly the Russian Parliament, has been interested in developing such efforts with the United Nations. A great contribution to the successful coordination of the preparatory work in this endeavour was made by the Ambassador of Egypt, Mr. Elaraby, for which we are very grateful to him. He reaffirmed that contribution in his introduction today.

At the same time, I would like to declare that Russia joins the sponsors of this draft resolution.

In conclusion, I wish everyone every success in this new endeavour.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Today, the General Assembly is considering the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", which my country has co-sponsored and hopes will be adopted by consensus.

My delegation, like most delegations present, believes that the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union supplement and support the work of the United Nations. We witnessed this at the international conferences convened by the Organization, which benefited from the cooperation of that parliamentary body and from its tireless interest in bringing new elements to the debates of the United Nations on such important topics as, *inter alia*, anti-personnel landmines and the rights of women and children.

We particularly welcome at this time the cooperation agreement signed between the two organizations on 24 July 1996. This agreement strengthens relations between the two organizations, principally in promoting peace, human rights and democracy in the world.

This agreement has already yielded results. On 5 and 6 September 1996, both organizations held a meeting in this city on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The meeting was aimed at enhancing cooperation among parliaments, Governments and intergovernmental organizations for the effective implementation of the agreements reached in Copenhagen. They drew up a practical catalogue of concrete steps and actions to be taken by national parliaments and their members in this respect.

My delegation believes that substantial cooperation between the two organizations — one representing Governments and the other representing parliaments — will also serve as a better expression of the will and interests of peoples at the international level.

Likewise, my delegation believes that a closer relationship with the Inter-Parliamentary Union is yet another United Nations show of support for democracies throughout the world and a way of strengthening — especially at the international level — the recognition due to the legislative branches of government, which are manifestations of popular will.

In view of the above, my delegation believes that cooperation between the United Nations and the various parliamentary groups is very valuable. We also wish to express in this regard our support for Parliamentarians for Global Action. That organization has done important work for international peace and security, human rights and democracy in the world. In so doing, it has supported the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is still possible to remember the fundamental role it played a few years ago in the so-called Six-Nation Initiative. More recently, it played a very important role in Burundi in the search for dialogue and understanding among parliamentarians themselves and with the United Nations system.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Italy wishes to voice its support for this document. The draft welcomes the conclusion, on 24 July 1996, of the agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union — an agreement which creates an appropriate and long-needed framework for increasing cooperation between the two organizations.

We are especially grateful to the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Nabil Elaraby, for his clear, comprehensive and thoughtful introduction of the draft resolution and are confident that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an organization of national parliaments. As we all know, parliaments are the highest expression of the ideals of democracy within the structure of a State. They are called on to perform fundamental tasks not only in the domestic domain, but also in international matters. They adopt laws and exercise control over Governments. They ratify treaties, implement laws and determine State policy towards international organizations.

Today, in a world in which States are more and more interdependent, rather than independent, parliaments are called on to play an unprecedented role in international cooperation as well. Parliaments represent the people and their will is the highest expression of the will of all the citizens of a country. In other words, they are the means to enhance democracy.

As the President of the Republic of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, said in his address to the General Assembly on 3 April 1996:

> "The *raison d'être* of the United Nations is the defence of the individual, of humanity.
>
> ..."

"The immense task of humanitarian aid is certainly the truest path to peace. This is because it involves sharing in the suffering of others.

"And let us not forget that helping people to live in freedom, to enjoy social justice worthy of man, to live in democracy, is certainly the highest form of humanitarian aid." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 103rd meeting, p. 4)*

The General Assembly is and must remain the bedrock of our Organization. It empowers all the other bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council, two thirds of whose members the General Assembly elects. The General Assembly reflects the opinions of our peoples and strengthens ties with the institutional realities of the Member States. For many years now, the Italian delegation to the general debate of the General Assembly has included representatives of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of Italy. This has proved to be a most positive experience, giving our political forces a fuller appreciation of the role and activities of the United Nations.

The Italian Parliament has been following the work of the United Nations more and more closely in recent years. In January, on the occasion of the visit of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Rome, the whole Italian Government met with the Chamber of Deputies in solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. On 9 October, the other House of Parliament, the Senate, dedicated a long and meaningful debate to the issue of Security Council reform. At the end, a resolution was adopted to:

"support in all the competent forums the reform objectives defined in the statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, starting with the Italian proposal for a reform of the Security Council."

This issue was also considered at the special session of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held at the United Nations headquarters last year from 30 August to 1 September.

Since its establishment more than a century ago, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has greatly contributed to international cooperation. Its action has been aimed at various objectives, in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes, the enhancement of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights throughout the world. It has promoted free elections and democratic institutions, fostered the participation of women in political life and supported the protection of minorities. In other words, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has constantly worked to affirm the ideals and to pursue the goals of modern international society.

The strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Union will be highly beneficial to both institutions. But more than anything else, it will greatly contribute to reaffirming and implementing, on the threshold of the third millennium, the purposes and principles enshrined in our Charter.

Mr. Laclaustra (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Parliamentary democracy is the natural framework for the development of the conditions most appropriate to international peace and security. Furthermore, the purposes and principles of the United Nations are in close agreement with the guidelines and criteria that have inspired the constitutions of peace-loving States.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union embodies at the international level the important role of national parliaments and is a forum for reflection and debate on the solutions needed to meet the challenges and requirements of today's society.

At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, my delegation emphasized its support for greater cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union — a cooperation that, in our view, should be given an appropriate institutional framework.

In this connection, my delegation welcomes the signing on 24 July of this year of a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This is not the time for an analysis of or detailed comments on the provisions of that important text, but we wish to express our satisfaction at the opportunity that has emerged since its signature for the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be invited to participate in the debates of United Nations bodies and in conferences and meetings held under its auspices.

That participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in United Nations activities will undoubtedly be extremely useful and beneficial for both organizations, as it will allow for the mutual exchange of information and for interaction between them.

With reference to the draft resolution on this item introduced by the delegation of Egypt, it has been a pleasure for my delegation to be among its sponsors. We trust that draft resolution A/51/L.6 will enjoy the unanimous support of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the support of the delegation of Spain for continued cooperation between the two organizations, sharing as it does their interest and concern for a world of greater peace and security.

Mr. Hayat (Pakistan): On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to thank the delegation of Egypt for introducing draft resolution A/51/L.6 and underlining the importance of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, while giving the parliamentary vision for international cooperation into the twenty-first century, the members of the IPU reaffirmed the soaring vision and common purposes that animated the drafters of the United Nations Charter. They rededicated themselves to strengthening the bonds of the world community for the realization of the ideals of that Charter. To contribute actively to the work of the United Nations, the Union decided to establish a formal framework for cooperation between the two organizations.

The United Nations has made invaluable contributions in a number of crucial areas, including peacekeeping, economic development, humanitarian assistance and the establishment of legal norms. Yet it has not been able to live up to the expectations of the peoples. To respond to their wishes, the United Nations needs to become more accessible to new actors, such as non-governmental organizations, who represent the civil society. These actors are playing an increasingly important role in many areas. Associations such as the IPU, the Parliamentarians for Global Action and other similar organizations are uniquely placed to build such bridges. While such associations can generate support for the United Nations to strengthen its role, they can certainly also sensitize the United Nations to the aspirations of the peoples.

At the political level, the IPU can help mobilize public opinion in favour of the United Nations. Parliamentarians can launch information campaigns to make their constituents aware of the accomplishments of the United Nations. Such an exercise is essential. In many countries people are either indifferent or becoming hostile to calls for greater financial and material support for the United Nations.

The United Nations efforts to establish the rule of law at the international level must be supported. In this regard, while preparing legislation, parliaments should take United Nations resolutions and decisions into account. National laws ought not to be at variance with the decisions that are agreed upon in the United Nations. Similarly, to augment the role of the United Nations in promoting international peace and security, legislators should ensure that the executive branch of the Government implements the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations.

To enhance the efficacy of the United Nations, parliamentarians can also sensitize the United Nations to the expectations of the peoples they represent. For some, the United Nations has not made enough progress in achieving the goals of peace, security and stability. In certain regions of the world, it has not been successful in ameliorating the sufferings of the people. Lack of action in Bosnia reinforced doubts about the ability of the United Nations to deal with conflicts. In our own region, the Kashmir dispute is still simmering and the people of Kashmir are still waiting for the United Nations to take measures for the implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

Mutual cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations can help in harnessing the power of the peoples for the realization of the lofty ideals of the United Nations Charter. At the operational level, the IPU can contribute to the United Nations role in the promotion of democracy, peacekeeping and peace-building.

To acquaint the nascent democracies with the new system of governance, the IPU, in collaboration with the United Nations, could launch an information and support programme. The sharing of information through the reliable United Nations channels would facilitate institution-building in relatively young parliaments.

In the field of peacekeeping and peace-building, the parliamentarians of major troop-contributing countries might consider the establishment of an IPU forum or caucus on United Nations peacekeeping operations. Such a caucus might arrange seminars and public campaigns in support of the United Nations peacekeeping endeavours. The parliamentarians can sensitize the public to the significance of these operations and ask the Governments to meet their obligations to this end.

The IPU and the United Nations share a common interest in maintaining peace and promoting economic development for the betterment of the peoples of the world. As a representative body of the peoples of the world, the IPU has an important role to play in the realization of a world free of the scourges of war, hunger, poverty and disease. To achieve these goals, both organizations should actively utilize the framework for cooperation.

Mr. Abdelhamid (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the General Assembly regarding the support and endorsement of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

I did not want to miss such an opportunity to reaffirm our support for this agreement. We hope that it will contribute to the good of humanity in general. This is particularly true since Sudan has played an active leadership role in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for some time now. I have been sent here by my Parliament, which was recently elected in free, fair elections in which for the first time there was substantial participation. I want to state the desire and the interest of my people to support cooperation between the two organizations.

Parliaments express the real will of peoples, and they express the interest of peoples in sharing power. We hope that as a result of the expected popular participation in parliaments, and the participation of all parliaments in the joint endeavours of the United Nations and the IPU, the hopes of peoples will be fulfilled and that we will come closer to dealing with questions of world peace and development.

We reaffirm that the United Nations is the mechanism which can coordinate all the efforts of the world for the good of humanity in all spheres: economic, developmental and others. Addressing this human, development aspect involves dealing with all spheres of cultural and economic diversity in an objective manner very different from the indifference that is shown in dealing with some of the other global questions that may be discussed in the General Assembly or the Security Council.

Once again I would like to express our absolute support for the cooperation agreement signed between the United Nations and the IPU.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.6. In this connection, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Peru, the Russian Federation and Tunisia have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.6?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/7).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 36

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/263)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.3)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.3.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is an honour for me to introduce, on behalf of the other sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.3, entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". I should like to announce that the following additional countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Canada, Germany, Jamaica, Panama, Romania, Suriname, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Venezuela. While thanking the Secretariat for the report contained in document A/51/263, which reflects the progress and the difficulties in our transition process, we wish to request that in the future more space be given to aspects relating to projects and objectives implemented by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

The draft resolution we are introducing together with the other sponsors emphasizes the concerns of a country which has needed the sustained support of the international community to try to overcome the aftermath

of the war in the midst of a triple transition — from war to peace, from a centralized economy to a market economy, and from authoritarianism to democracy — and at the same time to deal with a heavy external-debt burden and the economic effects of hurricanes and other natural disasters.

This draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system and in close cooperation with Nicaraguan authorities, to continue to provide all necessary assistance for the reconstruction, stabilization and development of Nicaragua. We trust that this brief and clear draft resolution will be adopted by the General Assembly without a vote.

Since this initiative came to the General Assembly for the first time as a result of Nicaragua's urgent needs in 1990 at the end of its decade-long armed conflict and of its starting on the path to democracy and economic and social development, we have seen emergency assistance to be a temporary but very effective mechanism to help resolve the difficult problems of transition. We hope these problems will soon be overcome. In this context, the emergency assistance for the reconstruction of our country which States, international organizations, the World Bank and non-governmental organizations lent to us during the Administration of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro has made a major contribution to strengthening democracy, consolidating the rule of law, eliminating poverty and, in general, to peace in Central America. The Support Group for Nicaragua approved by the General Assembly and made up of Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden has also played an important role in the search for consensus and in support for economic recovery.

There has certainly been broad participation on the part of the international community in peace-building in Nicaragua. In this regard, we can mention, among the many projects which have been carried out, reducing and professionalizing the army and the national police and involving former members of the Nicaraguan resistance in productive projects for economic development. Also with international support, we have financed programmes to reintegrate the population displaced and otherwise affected by the war, especially in rural areas in the north of the country. Such support has also promoted programmes for disarming the civilian population during the first years of the Chamorro Administration. In the field of economic recovery, we have promoted credit programmes to strengthen micro- and small businesses both in rural areas and in the cities. We have privatized most of the State-held enterprises. With the cooperation of friendly countries, which provided the necessary resources, we have undertaken major efforts to negotiate and purchase the commercial debt.

This enormous effort to renegotiate the debt is providing our country with a new opportunity to participate and to be a part of the world's economic system. We must realize that the effort made by our creditors may not be repeated, and applying for new loans in a responsible manner must be part of our principal purposes. Despite the reduction of the external debt achieved so far, Nicaragua continues to be a low-income country with high debts. It is therefore essential for us to continue those negotiations. In this regard, Nicaragua needs the support of the international community to continue to make progress towards a definitive solution in the process of renegotiating its external debt so that the effective servicing of the debt will be compatible with its capacity to pay.

The untenability of Nicaragua's external debt has been recognized in the G-7 initiative submitted to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which provides for an external debt relief mechanism for highly indebted countries, so that they can sustain its servicing.

With international assistance, and with the exceptional treatment given to our country by the General Assembly, peace and democracy are being consolidated in Nicaragua. This is reflected above all in the great reduction of political violence, the full establishment of public freedoms for the first time in the history of the country, the increasingly independent operation of the organs of the State, the decentralization of the central Government and the strengthening of local governments. The population at large recognizes these achievements and, after a decade of armed and fratricidal conflict, agrees that one of the most important achievements has been that of pacification.

While the country is at peace and has resumed its economic growth, the impact of the conflict on employment and underemployment indicators has kept them below expectations. Nicaragua continues to face major problems in terms of social indicators; poverty continues to be one of the main problems affecting a large part of the population. In these conditions, to help consolidate democracy we need the continued support of the international community and the United Nations, which has so generously supported us in recent years.

The Government, for its part, is undertaking great efforts in various fields to alleviate these problems.

In the context of the undeniable achievements and efforts of the Government of Doña Violeta Barrios de Chamorro to consolidate national reconciliation, peace, economic and social development and the rule of law in Nicaragua, on 20 October 1996 the Nicaraguan people held elections for President, the Legislature, local authorities and the Central American Parliament. The results of these elections, their significance and the transparency and seriousness with which they were held show the great importance that most of the Nicaraguan people attach to the final consolidation of democracy, peace and economic and social development.

Nicaragua cannot return to the past. The definitive solution to the problem of the external debt, of ownership and of a considerable improvement in national, foreign and private investment, in the framework of a sound and responsible macroeconomic policy favouring internal savings and contributing to improving the standard of living of the Nicaraguan people, must be our goal.

Nicaragua has reiterated its desire to be a peaceful and hard-working nation, and it has reiterated its appeal to all United Nations Member States to support its effort to consolidate peace and democracy — not only in Nicaragua but in Central America as a whole. As part of this effort, we have urgently needed the resolute support of the international community to maintain the hopes of a people that wishes to reconstruct its country in peace, justice and democracy. International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua has been in a pragmatic, concrete, realistic and well-founded way to contribute to the universal values that guide the United Nations.

Nicaragua has needed the support and solidarity of the international community to overcome the aftermath of war and the natural disasters that have stricken it in recent years. The unanimous adoption of the relevant resolutions since 1991 constitutes a clear sign of the political will of the international community to support the political and economic process that the people and the Government of Nicaragua are carrying out. All of this will result in the consolidation of peace and the democratic process in Nicaragua.

Once again, on behalf of the sponsors, I request that the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.3 be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is of particular interest for my delegation to participate in the debate on agenda item 36, entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters".

First of all, we wish to congratulate the delegation of that country on the noteworthy democratic elections held a few days ago.

As we have stated in previous debates on this question, Argentina understands that assistance to Nicaragua is a case from which we can draw guidelines that are useful for the entire system of international cooperation for development. The process in Nicaragua combines two situations that deserve attention in terms of reconstruction. One is the situation of post-conflict institutional and economic deterioration, although at the institutional level exemplary progress has been achieved, as shown by the recent elections to which I just referred. The other is the situation stemming from the aftermath of natural disasters.

A characteristic specific to the Nicaraguan process is that rehabilitation and reconstruction are taking place in a pluralistic framework, with the participation of all sectors of the population. To complement this effort by the people of Nicaragua, the United Nations must aim its technical cooperation and economic activities towards the objective of consolidating the democratic system and of strengthening institutions, these being the essential elements for the stability of the country and for promoting economic growth.

We must also recall that the Nicaraguan process is part of an overall regional process of democratization. Therefore, improvements in that country will have a positive impact for all of Central America.

We are aware of the serious difficulties faced by Nicaragua. To the circumstances already mentioned, we must add the burden of the external debt, which hampers productive investment and capital flows. Aware of this fact, Argentina has cancelled Nicaragua's debt. We encourage other creditor countries to do likewise, and urge the General Assembly to issue a recommendation along the same lines. In addition, in connection with concrete commitments to the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Nicaragua, Argentina has developed several technical cooperation projects between the two

countries, focusing on areas such as human resource training, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and energy.

Before concluding, we wish to express our appreciation for the work done by the Support Group for Nicaragua which, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, is playing a very active and dynamic role in supporting efforts at economic rehabilitation and social development in the country.

We also wish to express gratitude for the efforts of the international community, including the organs and organizations of the United Nations system, to complement the initiatives taken by the Nicaraguan Government.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our request for support to give special political, technical and financial attention to Nicaragua. Such assistance will allow the Nicaraguan Government to prepare medium- and long-term plans for its economic reconstruction and to consolidate and strengthen its institutions.

My delegation lends its full support to the draft resolution under consideration by the Assembly and hopes that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Valle (Brazil) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Nicaragua has made great progress since this item was included on the agenda of the General Assembly's forty-seventh session. Brazil has been closely following the progress made in Central America and especially in Nicaragua. As a member of the Support Group of the countries of the Contadora Group, Brazil participated in the successful efforts to bring peace to Central America through dialogue and reconciliation. Together with the efforts made by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, bilateral contributions have, without doubt, facilitated progress in the peace process.

In 1990 Nicaragua was still immersed in conflict. Today, towards the end of the present Administration, Nicaragua is a different country. President Violeta Chamorro will soon have fulfilled the aspiration expressed in her recently published autobiography to transfer power to someone who is also elected by the people. The Government of Violeta Chamorro deserves credit for having created conditions for national reconciliation, and the Nicaraguan people deserve our respect and solidarity for having taken up the banner of peace.

The Nicaraguan people can continue to look towards the future with confidence. Their institutions have been reorganized to provide a solid basis for democracy to thrive in an atmosphere of respect for civil liberties and protection of human rights. The ongoing economic and financial reforms are laying the ground for social and economic development. The establishment of peace in the region has produced a favourable environment for increased trade and economic cooperation. The process of consolidating democracy in Central America has reinvigorated cooperation in the region.

In spite of this positive evolution, Nicaragua still faces substantial challenges. Its high rate of population growth, combined with a stagnant gross domestic product, has been reducing the already low per capita income. A succession of natural emergencies has compounded the country's difficulties. The report of the Secretary-General (A/51/263) points to a change in this tendency and presents us with brighter prospects.

However, the assistance provided through multilateral or bilateral channels remains an essential component of the Government's attempts to provide Nicaraguan society with adequate education, sanitary facilities and other basic infrastructure. The United Nations, through the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies and bodies, has been playing a vital role in assisting Nicaraguans to modernize their country, as can be seen from the successive reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

Brazil, motivated by a wish to show material support for peace and development in Nicaragua, has been participating, under the aegis of OAS, in efforts to demine Nicaraguan territory, and has become involved in projects for the advancement of rural areas, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

Last year we attended the meeting of the consultative group that coordinates international assistance for Nicaragua, and we are continuing to collaborate in human resources development as well as in other fields.

Brazil has likewise demonstrated its readiness to enter into negotiations with a view to finding a mutually satisfactory solution to the question of outstanding Nicaraguan debt, within the framework of the Paris Club. In July 1996 we sponsored the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on emergency assistance to Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

Brazil wishes to take this opportunity to express its support to the people of Nicaragua as they pursue the process of consolidating democracy in their country. We will continue to seek ways to increase our cooperation, and we reaffirm our willingness to contribute to progress in Nicaragua.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Italy wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's report entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". After the dark years of civil war and the difficult post-war period, Nicaragua is taking definite steps toward economic development. Peace prospers and grows through social justice. It is our hope that the Nicaraguan Government will continue to pursue policies that assure sustainable development.

We were pleased to learn of the great achievements of the Nicaraguan democracy under the able leadership of President Violeta Chamorro and of its successful efforts in combating inflation and increasing gross national product. However, external debt continues to mortgage Nicaraguan development. That is why Italy has decided to continue to express, in a concrete manner — with deeds, not just words — its friendship and solidarity with the Nicaraguan Government and people through a unilateral reduction of the external debt.

It is known that Italy participated actively in the consolidation of the peace process in Central America through the financing of the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE) in six countries in the region, including Nicaragua. I do not need to recall here what PRODERE has done or the goals that it has achieved. Others with expertise in development policies have already done so through the years. The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Speth, called PRODERE

> "an extraordinary example of implementation, at the local level, of the human development model".

The former President of Costa Rica and Nobel laureate for peace, Oscar Arias, presented to the United Nations the report on the external and independent evaluation of PRODERE. President Arias said:

> "The terror, which a history of repression and political disintegration had instilled in the population, was progressively replaced by a climate of confidence suitable to a genuine state of law in the areas where PRODERE operated."

Encouraged by this very positive experience, Italy has decided to continue to support United Nations action in Central America. In Nicaragua, with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services, Italy is supporting the Alliance for Sustainable Development through the Programme for Sustainable Human Development at the Local Level. In this framework, the Italian Government is about to finance a new project to improve health infrastructures in Nueva Segovia and Jinotega for a total of about $2 million.

Our colleague the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua, Ambassador Erich Vilchez Asher, has just mentioned the natural disasters that have plagued this country. Also in this regard, may I recall that last summer we responded to the humanitarian appeal following Hurricane Caesar, and pledged a contribution for emergency relief assistance to the victims of the hurricane.

Italy has the real pleasure to be once again among the co-sponsors of the draft resolution on humanitarian assistance to Nicaragua. On behalf of my country, I also wish to confirm our unwavering political support for Nicaragua and for its Government. As Ambassador Vilchez Asher very rightly and eloquently said a few minutes ago:

> "Nicaragua cannot return to the past." *(supra, p. 19)*

This is also our strong belief and our most sincere wish.

Mr. Runge (Germany): The report of the Secretary-General on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua (A/51/263), which has been presented today, illustrates in a vivid manner the many and successful steps Nicaragua has taken, after years of internal conflict, towards peace, the consolidation of democracy and economic recovery. The election has been one more important step in this direction, even though the aftermath of the conflict is still weighing heavily on the country and natural disasters continue to aggravate the situation.

Democracy and the rule of law have been accepted by the population of Nicaragua in an unprecedented manner. All major political questions are being discussed in Parliament and translated into action in a democratic fashion. We are therefore convinced that Nicaragua will continue on its path of reconciliation and reconstruction.

We welcome the continued support rendered to Nicaragua and its people by the international community. Germany, as the third largest bilateral donor, is one of Nicaragua's major partners in the field of economic cooperation. While in the beginning of this partnership large amounts had to be contributed towards emergency measures, today the extensive bilateral development cooperation focuses mainly on the consolidation of structural adaptation processes, the rehabilitation of social infrastructures, the promotion of private enterprises (including vocational training), agricultural development, and the protection of the environment and natural resources.

In this context, our cooperation is increasingly directed towards rural areas, focusing on poverty and its alleviation, with special attention to women. We appreciate the recognition these issues have also been accorded in the framework of the ongoing national policy dialogue.

Since 1990, Germany has made a total of DM 800 million in official development assistance available to Nicaragua. In 1995/1996 alone, DM 56 million in additional funding has been pledged. Germany also recognizes that the extremely high external debt burden used to be one of the most devastating legacies of Nicaragua's past and has considerably hampered the process of economic revival. I am therefore glad to note that the German-Nicaraguan agreement on a rescheduling of DM 1 billion of debts, reached during the course of last year, has contributed to the considerable reduction of pressure in this area noted in the report.

My Government is particularly pleased with the environmental protection measures against which some of above-mentioned debts have been offset, and it hopes that conscious and careful treatment of the environment will ultimately result in reduced vulnerability to natural disasters.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the draft resolution introduced under agenda item 36. As in previous years, we fully support its contents and we are more than glad to join the co-sponsors. With a view to the work of this General Assembly, we furthermore note with satisfaction the provisions contained in operative paragraphs 9 and 10, concerning biennial consideration of the agenda item and its consolidation with related matters under the agenda item entitled "Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions" from 1998 on.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Government of Indonesia, our sincere appreciation to the representative of Nicaragua for his lucid and informative statement on this item. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/51/263), which clearly paints a sombre picture of the current situation in Nicaragua.

After a decade of civil strife, the Government of Nicaragua has indeed made significant progress in achieving peace and national reconciliation, which, in turn, has greatly enhanced the possibility of laying solid foundations for successful economic recovery and social development. Last Sunday we were pleased to see the democratic process being implemented through the elections for President, the Legislature, local authorities and the Central American Parliament. In this regard, Indonesia was honoured to participate in the process by sending its experts as official observers of the election upon the invitation of the Government of Nicaragua. It is therefore the hope of my delegation that these elections will mark the final consolidation of democracy and national reconciliation in Nicaragua.

Looking back over the recent past, we are very much aware that the cumulative impact of natural disasters and economic crises has combined to produce an untenable situation clearly deserving concerted international support and assistance. We therefore reaffirm General Assembly resolutions 50/85 and 50/132, which reflect the long plight of the Nicaraguan people and the urgent need for the international community to support the acceleration of economic recovery and social development.

One of the most serious problems confronting Nicaragua today is that of the excessive burden of external debt. This must be vigorously addressed and its terms renegotiated if sustainability is to be achieved. At the same time, we welcome the fact that Nicaragua is one of the countries that is eligible for the joint initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on debt, which is designed to relieve the debt burden of the poorest heavily indebted countries. Nicaragua's social and economic conditions, its natural vulnerability and its adverse debt-to-population ratio clearly underline the fragility of its economy and its inability to sustain its economic reconstruction and development.

For this reason, my delegation is convinced that further measures going beyond the terms of the Bretton Woods initiative are required to ensure that the country's external debt burden is reduced sufficiently to allow development to be revitalized. Only then, we believe, can its access to private investment be improved and the widespread poverty that has long plagued the Nicaraguan population be eradicated.

We are also pleased to note that various rehabilitation and reconstruction measures have already been embarked upon through the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies. And we support the medium- and long-term measures that are comprehensively covered in the Secretary-General's report. These, among others, are imperative if the continuity of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua is to be maintained and is to bear fruit.

In conclusion, Indonesia wishes to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of Nicaragua in their determined pursuit of political development and economic reconstruction. Such goals require not only collective national efforts, but also the attentive support of the international community. With this in mind, Indonesia continues its unwavering bilateral and multilateral political support for Nicaragua in its commendable attempts to achieve noble and constructive objectives.

Mr. Albín (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation wishes first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his report on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua. The report covers the progress made in Nicaragua, reflected in greater price stability and the establishment of a framework for developing a market-oriented economy. The support lent by the international community in this area has been very important.

The report also deals with the enormous efforts made by the Nicaraguan people in recent years to make progress in national reconciliation and institution-building. However, there is still much to be done. It will be necessary to redouble the efforts made so far. In keeping with the Secretariat's report, stability in Nicaragua has continued to depend on foreign assistance. The external debt remains one of the highest in the world in per capita terms, and poverty, which has been a problem for decades, continues to affect large sectors of the population. A new phase is now being initiated in which a long-term development strategy must be designed to improve the living conditions of the population. In the establishment and organization of a favourable economic and social environment, the international community is called upon to play a decisive role through the continuing interest and support required by Nicaraguans.

This Organization is a witness to the priority my country attaches to its relations with the countries of the Central American isthmus. In this context, and following a process of restructuring and organization of the various mechanisms through which Nicaragua and Mexico developed their relations, we held last year the first meeting of the binational commission for the purpose of raising the level of dialogue and of strengthening, through an integrated approach, consultation and cooperation in the various areas of our bilateral and international agendas. At that time we initiated important cooperation projects in such crucial areas as the war on poverty, strengthening education, the struggle against drug trafficking and environmental protection. These projects have been organized within the framework of the cooperation programme between Mexico and Central America, which includes more than 1,000 cooperation activities with Nicaragua. These measures include training, transfer of technological know-how, technical application services and advisory services in the solution of specific problems, such as disease control or energy supplies in some communities.

In the area of trade, the relationship between our two countries has been based on the desire for free, fair and transparent trade to give impetus to development. In recent years total trade between Mexico and Nicaragua has doubled, and the volume continues to increase, despite the adverse financial situation faced by my country in 1995. Our efforts to conclude a free-trade treaty have included almost 20 technical meetings that led to an intensive exchange of ideas and decisions. We are moving ever closer to a favourable conclusion for both countries.

All the foregoing shows the Government of Mexico's recognition of the catalytic role played by international cooperation in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua.

Mexico adds its voice again to the appeal to the international community and international organizations — in particular the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank — to continue to support the efforts to ensure the consolidation of the political, economic and

social institutions and to lay the bases for sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

In conclusion, we ask the General Assembly to renew its support to Nicaragua by adopting the draft resolution now before us by consensus.

Mr. Laclaustra (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In speaking today on the agenda item entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", I would like to underscore my Government's interest in that rehabilitation and reconstruction process, as well as in the international support it has been receiving.

In this connection, I wish to emphasize here the significant progress that has been made in Nicaragua in both the political and economic fields since a resolution on this item was adopted last year, at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

My Government has followed with great interest the electoral process that has been carried out in Nicaragua, culminating in the elections of 20 October, which enjoyed a very high voter turn out in a noteworthy climate of peace and respect.

I would also like to call attention to the positive results shown by some of the country's macroeconomic indicators, which point to a recovery of the Nicaraguan economy, and to the significant reforms that have been carried out to liberalize the economy and make it more competitive.

Both the economic and political aspects must be translated into considerable improvements in the standard of living of the Nicaraguan people, who are the object and principal beneficiaries of the process.

In recent years Spain has attached special attention to cooperation with Nicaragua, not only bilaterally but also within the framework of the European Union and the United Nations.

Spain's bilateral cooperation with Nicaragua is expressed through joint Spanish-Nicaraguan commissions. This institutional cooperation is supplemented by Spain's emergency assistance mechanisms for Nicaragua, the aim of which is to contribute to the relief of the population at times of national disasters, such as recently occurred there.

Among the cooperation programmes being considered within the framework of the European Union is a support project for Nicaragua's National Assembly, whose competences and authority have been strengthened since the constitutional reforms of 1995. This should constitute a fundamental element in the process of strengthening democracy in that country.

With respect to the United Nations, I would like to recall my country's signing of an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the end of 1995 to establish an $11 million trust fund to finance programmes that contribute to strengthening governance in Central America, and therefore in Nicaragua.

I also wish to recall the intensive cooperation Spain has been developing, together with other Members of the United Nations and with the representatives of UNDP in Nicaragua, within the framework of the Support Group for this country. This cooperation is of proven effectiveness. It must continue, and we are committed to continuing it.

As I indicated at the beginning of my statement, Spain attaches special importance to the electoral process in Nicaragua. My country committed itself to this process on two tracks. First, we made a commitment through the participation of a prestigious Spanish firm — with Spanish financing — entrusted with vote-counting and data processing, as the result of an agreement signed between that firm and the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua.

Secondly, we made a commitment through the dispatch of election observers, who were present during the voting. Despite certain difficulties, the election took place in a climate of moderation, which we consider very positive.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua is a challenge that the country should not face alone, but rather together with the entire international community. In this connection, my Government wishes to acknowledge in this forum the efforts made by the political forces, the economic actors and, most essentially, the people of Nicaragua to move forward on this track. At the same time, we welcome this item's presence again on the General Assembly's agenda as unequivocal proof of the importance the international community attaches to it.

For all these reasons, Spain urges the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to continue to lend support and assistance to Nicaragua for the consolidation of peace and democracy and for the development of the country. Spain also wishes to reiterate its support for and continued commitment to that task.

Guided by this spirit, my Government has co-sponsored draft resolution A/51/L.3, which we hope will be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have the honour to participate on behalf of the Central American countries in the debate on agenda item 36, "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". In so doing, I wish to emphasize the importance we attach to the rehabilitation process in that brotherly country.

I first wish to point out that we fully adhere to the statement made by the Ambassador of Nicaragua, Mr. Erich Vilchez Asher.

The peoples of Central America have suffered the consequences of the structural problems that historically characterize developing countries. These problems, by their very nature and by the absence of just and equitable solutions, have been the root cause of the political, economic and social conflicts that culminated in armed conflicts in the region during the 1970s. As a result, we lost ground in the efforts to improve the standard of living of Central American societies. Those of us who experienced armed conflict were most deeply affected.

This situation in Central America was compounded by the fact that nature has not been very benign towards our peoples, whose efforts in the search for better standards of living have not infrequently met with the devastation caused by natural disasters: earthquakes, tropical storms, hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions and so forth. These have had tragic results, not only because of losses of human life, but also because of social and economic consequences that have compelled us to seek humanitarian relief assistance. These situations have absorbed resources that would have otherwise been devoted to economic and social development programmes.

Nicaragua is one of the Central American countries whose people have suffered most from these problems. It has deployed enormous efforts to promote peace, stability, reconciliation, reconstruction, economic recovery and social development. These efforts have enjoyed the solidarity and support of the United Nations system and of the international community. Both moral and material support have been extended, through international technical and financial aid and cooperation.

Nicaragua, together with the rest of Central America, has made great progress in overcoming difficulties. However, serious problems still remain whose causes have not been totally overcome, especially as regards those beyond man's control, such as natural disasters.

Central American countries view with satisfaction the programmes being developed in Nicaragua, with the support of the international community, to solve urgent development problems, particularly in the social field, especially as regards programmes that favour the most vulnerable sectors of society, which are the most deeply and directly affected by any crisis.

In this respect, we are grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/263) on agenda item 36. We unconditionally support the draft resolution in document A/51/L.3, which appeals to the United Nations system and to the donor community to supplement national efforts in Nicaragua to promote social and sustainable development, thus allowing it to move ahead to better conditions for the Nicaraguan people.

We reaffirm the need for Nicaragua to have access to sources of financing on favourable terms in order to provide incentives to economic recovery within the framework of the commitments and development strategy adopted in Central America. This should include a review of the country's debt-servicing burden. Support for and progress in political, economic, social and environmental well-being is also of benefit to the Central American region as a whole.

We have supported Nicaragua's attempts to turn from a country devastated by war and natural disasters to one in transition towards the consolidation of democracy and stability and the promotion of development. That support has been enshrined in commitments adopted at the Central American presidential summit meetings and in relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Central American cooperation with Nicaragua is also embodied and implemented through a variety of meetings held at the regional level.

We are confident that the draft resolution, of which we are a sponsor, will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.3.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.3?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/8).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly. I should like to inform the members that on Tuesday, 29 October, as the first item in the morning, the Assembly will take up the first report of the Credentials Committee which was issued this morning as document A/51/548. Agenda item 47, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", will therefore be taken up as the second item.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.42

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Monday, 28 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/51/307)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.9)

Amendments (A/51/L.10, A/51/L.11 and A/51/L.12)

The President: Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose, if there are no objections, that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at 12 noon today.

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1995.

Mr. Blix (International Atomic Energy Agency): It is an honour for me, on the occasion of the submission of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 1995, to address the General Assembly and give an up-to-date account of the activities and concerns that engage the IAEA.

One hundred years ago, the French professor Henri Becquerel discovered radioactivity. Some 50 years later, at the end of the Second World War, two nuclear bombs were launched over Japan, demonstrating the destructive power of nuclear energy. Ten years later the peaceful potential of nuclear energy came to the fore at the first International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy at Geneva. Much of the secrecy that had surrounded nuclear science during and after the war was lifted, which led to widespread optimism about the potential benefits of the various uses of nuclear energy.

Since then a nervous world has watched the belligerent atom during some 2,000 nuclear-weapons tests and a nuclear armaments race. In the same period there has been rapid development and deployment of the beneficial uses of nuclear energy to generate electricity, to combat cancer and help diagnostics, to improve food production, and to measure and reduce pollution — to mention but a few uses.

Throughout this period the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has served member States by helping to compile nuclear-relevant data, to disseminate knowledge and know-how about peaceful uses of nuclear energy, to draft common radiation protection and other safety standards, and to verify that nuclear material under international safeguards is used only for peaceful purposes. Over time the work of the Agency has both expanded and changed considerably. Governmental involvement in the promotion of nuclear science has given way somewhat to emphasis on regulatory work in

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the fields of the safe use of nuclear installations and the safe disposal of nuclear waste. A similar change of emphasis has occurred also in the IAEA. While some of the provisions of the IAEA Statute concerning ownership and operation of nuclear installations — for instance, for the storage of plutonium — may have been overambitious and remain unused so far, the rule of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) obliging parties to submit all their present and future nuclear activities to IAEA safeguards has resulted in a sizeable verification activity of growing importance. Development cooperation, based both on the IAEA Statute and called for under the NPT, has similarly become a large activity. However, financing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was once a large source of funding for IAEA technical cooperation, has now become a minor source. Moreover, the orientation of programmes has shifted somewhat from basic nuclear science and technology to projects with more direct impact on sustainable development: increased food production, identification of water resources, eradication of insect pests, development of new plant mutants, and so forth.

As the world changes and the problems facing Governments change, intergovernmental organizations, which are their joint tools, must also change. Moreover, unforeseen events influence the agendas of Governments, and this is reflected also in the agenda of the IAEA. It suffices to mention the names Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Semipalatinsk and Mururoa, to evoke the growing engagement of the IAEA in the fields of nuclear safety, safeguards verification and assessment of the radiological situation at nuclear-weapons test sites.

Change is occurring also in the methods and techniques used by the IAEA to fulfil its functions. Information compiled by the Agency from member States — for instance, on the operation of nuclear installations — is now processed electronically and often made available on line not only to member Governments but to all interested parties. To take an example, INIS, or the International Nuclear Information System, is a truly international bibliography of material published in the nuclear field. It is available on line. I might further mention that, although meetings of the Agency's Board of Governors are closed and the records restricted, under a recent decision practically all Board documentation older than two years is declassified and will soon be available to all on line. In addition, a home page on the Internet now offers a wealth of information about the Agency and its current work. In the safeguards field, the control of nuclear material is being made more effective and efficient by the use of remote monitoring and automatic transmission of data. Another innovation is a direct line between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and myself to ensure rapid communication in case of crisis. The Agency has also indicated its readiness to have a televised link to the Security Council to enable the Council to be briefed at any time without delay. So far the need has not been felt for this, but a practice of informal briefings for the Council is developing, thus ensuring close liaison between the nuclear inspection arm of the United Nations system and the enforcement organ.

It is possible that continuous change and adaptation have been made easier within the IAEA by the practice of the Agency of rotating most professional staff. Long-term staff are most valuable for stability, experience and institutional memory, but for flexibility in programming, for innovation and for awareness of current problems in the field and their possible solutions, a steady inflow and outflow of professional staff has proved helpful in the case of the IAEA.

There is no lack of challenges in the nuclear sphere and member Governments would want the organization to respond to many of these. The problem is that the zero-real-growth policy, combined with the difficulty of abandoning existing essential programmes and of making sufficient resources available through economies, limits what can be tackled. Many new tasks — for instance, measures countering illicit trafficking in nuclear materials or ad hoc projects concerning nuclear safety and waste — are, in fact, handled in large measure on the basis of extrabudgetary voluntary contributions. This is not satisfactory, but is far better than inaction.

Let me now turn to some of the challenges currently facing the IAEA. With the nuclear arms race over, a number of nuclear arms control or disarmament treaties have been concluded or are in the making. I shall soon address the verification tasks which this may place on the IAEA, but at this point I would like to pose the important question of whether putting the evil genie of the belligerent atom back into the bottle will contribute to a more general acceptance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in particular the exploitation of the potential for the generation of electricity and heat. It is too early to know the answer, but it is not too early to recognize its importance.

Among the vital issues facing the world is the risk of global warming caused by excessive emissions of some

gases, linked in large measure to energy use: notably carbon dioxide and methane. The Framework Convention on Climate Change, signed at the Rio Conference in 1992, did not specify how the risk is to be met. While the United Nations system has at its disposal a group of prominent scientific experts in climatology — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — which examines the problems, probability and causes of climate change, the system does not have any single organization providing impartial expert data and analysis of different sources of energy. As a result, some of the energy scenarios designed by the IPCC in response to the risk of global warming are questioned by outside experts.

At the IAEA the goal of sustainable development is fully accepted, and it has been considered important that all energy sources be impartially and scientifically analysed for their impact upon life, health and the environment, including climate. For this reason cooperation has been sought with several other international organizations in a joint project, known as DECADES, dealing with electricity generation. The project develops methods and software through which individual countries are able to assess and compare the health and environmental impact, as well as the cost, of different ways of generating electricity, taking into account the full cycle — that is to say, from the extraction of fuel to the disposal of waste. Not surprisingly, these analyses show that the fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas, in this order — are at the top of the scale of energy sources contributing greenhouse gases — particularly carbon dioxide — while nuclear power and renewable sources of energy contribute the least greenhouse gases. These findings are entirely consistent with the experience reported by Mr. Priddle, the Head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), at the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Geneva last summer. Mr. Priddle observed that:

> "Nuclear power accounted for the greater part of the lowering of the carbon intensity of the energy economies of the OECD countries".

There should now be a general awareness among Governments that an expanded use of nuclear power and of renewable sources of energy, together with conservation measures, could significantly help to restrain greenhouse gas emissions. Regrettably, this has not yet led to common conclusions at the global level. A few Governments — in Japan, the Republic of Korea, China and in Eastern Europe — expressly refer to environmental concerns in explaining their expanded use of nuclear power. However, at present most countries are continuing to expand their use of fossil fuels and are failing to meet the targets which they have set for themselves to restrain their emissions of greenhouse gases. There is a regrettable gap between the rhetoric of restraint and the reality of growing greenhouse gas emissions.

The reason why nuclear power expansion is not very actively discussed by most Governments — despite its significant potential as a response to the risk of global warming — lies in the controversy that surrounds this source of energy in many industrial countries. Although nuclear arms control and disarmament will eliminate one past common concern, others remain, notably regarding safety in nuclear power operation, safety in nuclear waste disposal and illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. The IAEA is actively engaged in all these subjects.

With regard to nuclear safety, the accident at Chernobyl in 1986 had very serious consequences for human health and the environment and a major negative impact on the further expansion of nuclear power. This makes it all the more important that all the lessons be drawn that can be drawn from this tragic event. On the tenth anniversary of the accident, the IAEA, the World Health Organization and the European Commission co-sponsored an international conference last April to sum up the results of the various assessments made and specialized meetings held on the consequences of the accident. It attracted the participation of over 800 experts from 71 countries and concluded with a remarkable degree of consensus. Among the conclusions was a confirmation of a significant increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer among children born before and within some months after the accident. No increase in any other form of cancer has been identified. The social and psychological consequences of the accident, combined with the consequences of the political and economic changes, have been severe. At the technical level renewed attention must be paid to the "sarcophagus" around this destroyed reactor. The question of the closure of the whole Chernobyl plant needs also to be conclusively settled.

A Summit of eight States on Nuclear Safety and Security was held in Moscow on 19-20 April 1996. It resulted *inter alia* in recognition of the importance of nuclear power as an energy source that is consistent with the goal of sustainable development and in commitments to an international nuclear safety culture, as well as to strengthening the IAEA safeguards system. Needless to

say, this attention at the highest levels to nuclear matters is of great importance as guidance both to those working in the nuclear sphere and to the general public.

Last week on United Nations Day, 24 October, the IAEA Convention on Nuclear Safety entered into force. While recognizing that national authorities have the responsibility for supervising the safety of nuclear power plants, this Convention lays down a number of basic principles which must be respected. It also provides a procedure under which the parties are obliged to submit reports on the safety of nuclear power plants on their territory and to accept review of these reports by other States.

In the coming year three new legal instruments relevant to safety are expected to be finalized. A new convention will contain basic rules concerning the safe management, including disposal, of radioactive waste. Like the Convention on Nuclear Safety, it will oblige parties to submit periodic reports on implementation and to accept review of them by States parties. Other instruments will bring about a revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and an arrangement for supplementary funding.

The development of conventions and other legal instruments and standards, together with a variety of international services and assistance programmes, and heightened national attention to nuclear safety, help to establish the international nuclear safety culture to which the participants in the Moscow Summit committed themselves. Results of the efforts to strengthen nuclear safety can be seen in the reduced number of unplanned stoppages in nuclear power plants around the world.

Before I move on to discuss the IAEA's various tasks relating to the belligerent atom, I must touch briefly on the Agency's work in disseminating nuclear techniques to developing countries. I referred in my introduction to the changes that have occurred in the IAEA's programme of development cooperation, and in particular the shift in emphasis from basic research to projects that promote sustainable development and benefit the end user — for instance, the cancer patient or the farmer. I am pleased to report also that by raising the level of ambition and through better management, it has been possible to reach record high levels of programme delivery. Let me give but two examples of projects, both in Africa.

Water resources management is essential for sustainable development, and isotope hydrology techniques have unique capabilities to trace and map water resources so that best use can be made of them. Within a major regional project in Africa, the IAEA is helping to apply these techniques. For instance, the Moyale region in south Ethiopia, covering 45,000 square kilometres, which has three million inhabitants and one of the largest cattle herds on the continent, depends entirely on scarce groundwater resources. Isotopic data have now made it possible to distinguish between renewable and non-renewable water resources, leading to better estimates of the total sustainable capacity for meeting water requirements in this region.

The other example I want to mention relates to the use of radiation in the eradication of some insect pests that affect food production and health. The sterilization of certain insects, such as the Mediterranean fruit fly and the tsetse fly, and the release of large quantities of sterile males make it possible, after unsuccessful campaigns with conventional means, actually to eradicate an insect pest. Thus, through a major effort by the IAEA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) a few years ago, the New World screwworm was eradicated in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Right now the focus is on a very promising project to eradicate the tsetse fly from Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania, thereby permitting better cattle-rearing on the island. The aim is complete eradication before the end of 1997. The expected successful outcome is likely to stimulate similar projects in some larger sites in Africa.

I turn now to the growing role of the IAEA to help prevent a further spread of nuclear weapons and to verify nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements. The most important event in this field during the past year was undoubtedly the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the convention prohibiting all nuclear weapons tests. Although there was considerable discussion during the negotiations in Geneva about the possible financial and other advantages of using the IAEA to run the verification activities under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to provide the secretariat, the solution eventually adopted was a small separate organization to be located in Vienna. At this juncture it is difficult to know whether simple co-location, welcome as it is, will offer much by way of synergy. While there is some uncertainty about the formal entry into force of the CTBT, it is worth noting that all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are already obliged under the NPT not only to refrain from nuclear weapons tests, but also from preparing for such

tests, and the IAEA has the duty to verify in those States that these obligations are respected.

The dominant verification task of the IAEA consists in the operation of comprehensive safeguards under the NPT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. The 180 non-nuclear-weapon States now party to the NPT have committed themselves to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA. I regret to report that, despite periodic reminders, over 50 of these States have yet to do so.

Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones are increasing in number and play an important role in consolidating commitments to non-proliferation on a regional basis and in providing specific supplementary arrangements and undertakings responding to needs of the particular region. All of them rely on the IAEA for verification. The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) will hopefully enter into force for its entire zone of application during the next year. The Pelindaba Text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty signed in Cairo last April, which establishes a nuclear-weapon-free zone for Africa, goes further than the NPT. For example, it prohibits any armed attacks against nuclear installations. Similarly, the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, signed in Bangkok last December, goes beyond non-proliferation and deals also with issues of nuclear trade, nuclear safety and radioactive waste.

A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has been on the agenda of the United Nations and of the IAEA for a number of years. The General Conference of the IAEA has requested me to consult with countries in the region concerning the verification issues linked to such a zone. From my many discussions in the region, I conclude that existing comprehensive safeguards alone will not suffice as means of verification. Most likely, some combination of international and regional or bilateral arrangements will have to be worked out. I have been requested to convene a second workshop on these verification issues in 1997, and I shall do so.

The Agency's verification of Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions has, since August 1994, involved more than 600 inspections, the majority of which were conducted without prior notice. These inspections, plus the analysis of the vast amount of documentation handed over to the IAEA and to United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) after the departure of the late Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan Al-Majid and the follow-up of procurement transactions, are part of the assessment of Iraq's reissued full, final and complete declaration of its former nuclear weapons programme. The carrying out of joint IAEA-UNSCOM multidisciplinary inspections at weapons-capable sites contributes to the effectiveness of the ongoing monitoring and verification programme for the detection of any attempts by Iraq to conduct activities proscribed by the Security Council resolutions.

In the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the information and access provided to us have been and remain insufficient for a comprehensive picture of the nuclear programme, and questions remain about the completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear activities. Although present verification arrangements give confidence that nuclear installations subjected to a freeze under the agreed framework between the United States and the DPRK are actually frozen, confidence about the DPRK's compliance with its non-proliferation commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can only come about through more information and full implementation of the safeguards agreement.

A considerable strengthening of NPT-type safeguards became acceptable and was, indeed, demanded by most Governments after the discovery of clandestine nuclear weapons activities in Iraq. In particular, greater assurance was sought regarding non-declared nuclear material and activities related to such material. It was clear that such assurances could only be obtained by giving the IAEA access to more information, by allowing inspectors greater access to relevant sites and by introducing new techniques, such as analysis of environmental samples.

Many of the measures contemplated have been introduced under the authority given to the Agency under existing comprehensive safeguards agreements. For the introduction of measures which may go beyond the authority given in these agreements, an additional draft protocol has been worked out by the secretariat and is now the subject of discussion in a committee under the Board of Governors. Most of the measures now being discussed have been tried out in several industrialized States without great problems for the Agency or for the State concerned. Although these measures will, in the long run, bring efficiency gains and be cost-neutral, it is inevitable that they will also add some burden and inconvenience to the inspected party. Regrettably, as we all know from our experience of controls at airports,

security against possible violations by a few requires some inconveniencing of many.

One of the objections currently raised to the proposed strengthened safeguards system is that it unfairly exempts nuclear-weapon States from measures which are seen as burdensome by some of the non-nuclear-weapon States required to accept them. As disarmament progresses, such inequality of burden should diminish. Verification in States that still have nuclear weapons obviously cannot aim at establishing the absence of nuclear weapons, which is the purpose of the strengthened safeguards system. However, verification in nuclear-weapon States could aim at providing assurance that fissionable material from dismantled weapons does not go into new weapons and that a cut-off agreement prohibiting the production of plutonium or highly enriched uranium for weapons use is respected.

A cut-off agreement remains to be negotiated. Meanwhile the United States and Russia are, in fact, dismantling nuclear weapons, and the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit last April endorsed the idea of IAEA verification that material from dismantled weapons and other military stocks remains in peaceful storage or use. The IAEA is, in fact, already safeguarding some such material in the United States, and Russia appears willing to accept similar inspections in due course. At a recent trilateral meeting of the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy, the United States Secretary of Energy and myself on the occasion of the IAEA General Conference, it was agreed jointly to explore technical, safeguards-related and financial issues which are connected with such verification. It is my hope that we are here witnessing the first steps towards verification of nuclear disarmament.

One final word of caution is needed after this optimistic note: even with a keen eye to efficiency, the management of multilateral nuclear cooperation, including verification of arms control and disarmament, requires resources: well-qualified personnel, state-of-the-art equipment, and so on. Without adequate funding such personnel cannot be recruited or retained, and the purchase of advanced, cost-effective equipment will be curtailed.

In concluding let me express appreciation to the Government of Austria for its continued support of United Nations system organizations in Vienna.

The President: I now call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.9.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the sponsors, Canada is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.9 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This draft resolution reflects the significant developments that have taken place in the work of the Agency since 1995 under the steady and capable direction of its Director General, Mr. Hans Blix.

The Director General has provided visionary leadership over the last 16 years. He is to be commended for his unwavering promotion of the safe and regulated transfer of nuclear technology, and his defence of the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of IAEA safeguards. This delicate balancing act was always achieved with the utmost degree of professionalism and diplomacy. We welcome his comments this morning and thank him for yet another comprehensive report.

The Agency's dedication to maintaining a balance between technical cooperation, safeguards and nuclear safety — the three pillars of the Agency — is noteworthy, and the draft resolution makes every attempt to mirror this equilibrium.

(spoke in English)

Please permit me to draw attention to some of the more significant elements of this year's draft resolution. The richness of the discussions within the Agency and among its members on the technical cooperation activities of the Agency is reflected in this resolution. In particular, we have included in this year's text the thought expressed in IAEA General Conference resolution GC(40)/RES/13, regarding the strengthening of Agency's technical cooperation activities related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Examples of such contributions made by the IAEA include important work on food irradiation, medical isotopes and pest control.

In addition, there is a new and, we think, welcome reference to the need for the Agency's technical cooperation activities to contribute to sustainable development in developing countries. The Agency's efforts in the production of potable water are particularly noteworthy in this regard.

The important decision of the Board of Governors to establish a committee to draft a protocol to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the nuclear safeguards system is also reflected in the draft resolution. We are aware that a strong commitment to

nuclear safety practices is paramount if nuclear energy is to continue into the twenty-first century. In this connection, we were pleased to welcome the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, on United Nations Day, 24 October 1996. This is the first year in which such a reference has been included in the draft resolution. The significance of this Convention to all States cannot be overstated.

The important work being done on a Convention on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management is also highlighted — for the first time — in this year's draft resolution.

It is important that this draft resolution on the Agency's annual report receive wide support. We all have a common interest in ensuring that the work of the Agency in all areas receives due recognition.

Finally, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, which now include Japan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine, Canada is pleased to put this text forward. We believe that this draft resolution accurately represents the activities of the Agency, and we have worked with all members in Vienna and New York to develop a text which could attract consensus. We hope that this draft resolution will, indeed, be adopted with the broadest possible support.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/51/L.9, contained in document A/51/L.10.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I am pleased to speak today to introduce the amendment proposed by Egypt, contained in document A/51/L.10, to the draft resolution (A/51/L.9) just introduced by Permanent Representative of Canada on agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Before I proceed with the introduction of my amendment, I would like first of all to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to Mr. Hans Blix, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the Agency on its activities for last year. I would also like to pay tribute to the delegation of Canada for preparing, negotiating and presenting, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution on this agenda item, and particularly for its repeated attempts to accommodate our proposal in the main text of the draft — which, for certain obvious reasons, was not possible.

The situation in the Middle East is fraught with increasing anxiety and concern as a result of an ambiguous Israeli nuclear programme and the refusal of Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. This situation was subject to thorough discussion at the last IAEA General Conference, in September 1996. The Conference accepted by consensus a statement by the President of the Conference on 20 September 1996 relating to agenda item 23 of the General Conference on application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, which requested the Director General to invite experts from the Middle East and other areas to a technical workshop on safeguards, verification technologies and related experiences.

In view of the urgent need for extensive IAEA efforts in the fields mentioned in the statement, particularly in the Middle East, my delegation believes that such a request should be noted as a final preambular paragraph in the draft resolution.

As the statement by the President of the General Conference, to which our amendment refers, was accepted by the General Conference by consensus, my delegation proposes that this amendment also be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus, thereby enabling the preservation of the long-standing tradition of adopting by consensus the draft resolution on this important agenda item.

Israel claims that the statement on the workshop made by the President of the General Conference was linked in one way or another to a statement by the President concerning the composition of the regional groups of the IAEA in the context of article VI of the Statute, which is a totally separate item. For my delegation, this is an obvious, flagrant attempt to link two separate issues. There was not and will not be any such linkage between those two issues, either in the IAEA or in the General Assembly, because of the simple fact that Egypt alone does not have the right to decide on Israel's acceptance by any IAEA regional group. In a nutshell, the position of Israel within any regional group of the IAEA is a matter between Israel and the members of that regional group, and cannot, as has been claimed, be packaged with a sensitive and important issue such as the future of the Middle East as a whole. It can be settled only through consultations with member States, as the statement of the Conference President on that issue made clear.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/51/L.9, contained in document A/51/L.12.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): I am pleased to introduce Israel's amendment (A/51/L.12) to the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). During the IAEA General Conference, held last month, two statements were issued by the President of the Conference and adopted by the Conference. The first statement dealt with a workshop on verification to be convened by the IAEA for Middle East experts and other interested parties. The second statement dealt with the composition of regional groups in the IAEA in the context of article VI of the IAEA's Statute.

Both statements were negotiated and finally adopted as a package. Following the tabling of an Egyptian amendment to the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which deals only with the workshop mentioned in one of the statements of the President of the Conference, the Israeli delegation has found it appropriate to table its own amendment. The Israeli amendment deals with the second statement of the President of the Conference concerning the composition of regional groups of the IAEA. It reads as follows:

> "Noting the statement by the President accepted by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on 20 September 1996, in the context of the agenda item "Amendment of article VI of the Statute" in which, *inter alia*, the President requests that the Chairman of the Board of Governors consult with member States and report, for the consideration of the General Conference, specific proposals to include each member State within the appropriate area at the time of the Conference in September 1997." *(A/51/L.12)*

Israel did not wish to amend the draft resolution on the IAEA. However, under the circumstances we had to do so in order to keep the balance. Therefore, we call upon all Member States to support Israel's amendment.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, my delegation wishes to express its firm support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its annual report. The IAEA has played a crucial role in assuring that nuclear energy is not used for military purposes and in promoting its peaceful use through technical cooperation and nuclear safety programmes. Indeed, the Agency holds an important position in maintaining international security and assisting in the development of humankind. Because of this, the United States and the global community have a compelling interest in supporting a strong and efficient IAEA. We commend the Director General, Mr. Blix, and the IAEA secretariat for their continued effective and committed service.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has reaffirmed and strengthened the international community's commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. The foundation of international cooperation under this agreement rests on the IAEA's safeguards system, which builds confidence among States that transfers of nuclear technology and information will not be diverted for military purposes.

In the light of recent experiences, improvements to the IAEA's ability to detect the diversion of nuclear material from declared facilities and to provide credible assurance of the absence of undeclared activities are necessary. The goal of reinforcing the non-proliferation regime under the NPT also depends on reinforcing the IAEA safeguards system. Bearing this in mind, my Government supports early action in the IAEA to strengthen its safeguards mandate.

My Government commends IAEA efforts to monitor the freeze of nuclear activities and to implement safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The United States-DPRK Agreed Framework is important to the preservation of stability on the Korean peninsula. None of the progress being made under the agreement would have been possible without the involvement of the IAEA. The United States remains committed to the terms of the Agreed Framework, and continues to urge the DPRK to cooperate fully with the Agency, as set forth in the agreement.

On the subject of Iraq, We believe that Iraq deliberately continues to withhold information from the IAEA regarding its nuclear weapons programme. We note, though, that the language on Iraqi compliance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions contained in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution presented today does not accurately reflect the current situation. We must be clear — Iraq continues to withhold information concerning its nuclear programme in violation of its commitments under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other Security Council resolutions. The IAEA noted in its most recent

semi-annual report to the Security Council that it believes that Iraq still retains a complete record of its nuclear programme.

The United States commends the continuing efforts of the IAEA to determine the scope of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons programme, which was undertaken in clear violation of Iraq's commitments as a party to the NPT. We support the IAEA's comprehensive on-site monitoring and verification system, which is intended to thwart the rebuilding of Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

I again call upon Iraq to honour fully the commitments it accepted under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other Security Council resolutions, and to provide immediately all information and equipment relating to its weapons of mass destruction programmes to the IAEA and the United Nations Special Commission. There can be no consideration of modifying the sanctions regime on Iraq until it complies fully with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

May I turn to two other subjects, namely nuclear safety and technical cooperation. We commend the IAEA secretariat for expanding significantly its activities in the field of nuclear safety. These activities are now housed in a separate department within the secretariat. In addition, we commend the secretariat for playing an instrumental role in fostering the development of a global nuclear safety culture based on an improved international legal framework, recommended safety standards and advisory services. The Agency should take great satisfaction in its supportive role in the successful conclusion of the Convention on Nuclear Safety which entered into force on 24 October 1996. The Convention underscores that final responsibility for nuclear safety lies with national Governments and establishes the principle that international cooperation is essential for achieving the highest levels of nuclear power safety worldwide. The widest possible adherence to this Convention will enable this achievement to be met.

We support the IAEA secretariat's efforts to enhance its technical cooperation activities through the model project concept. By stressing its role as a partner in development and providing technology based on the socio-economic needs of a State, the IAEA is improving its efficiency and effectiveness in providing tangible benefits in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for people around the world. We urge the secretariat to continue its reforms within the Department of Technical Cooperation aimed at improving project formulation, management and implementation.

In closing, my Government applauds the IAEA's contribution to international peace, security, and welfare. The United States pledges its continued strong support for the Agency and its excellent work.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

Allow me to begin by expressing the gratitude of the members of the European Union and those States which have aligned themselves with this statement for the important work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during 1995 and the first part of 1996, as described in the annual report for 1995. I should also like to thank the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, for the additional information which he has just given. We commend the Director General and the secretariat and staff of the Agency for their commitment and professionalism in delivering an expanded programme within resource constraints.

The presentation to the General Assembly of the annual report of the IAEA provides us with a valuable opportunity to review the work which the Agency has carried out and to measure the impact and efficiency of its activities in the various fields in which it operates in accordance with its statutory functions, both in respect of its work in the prevention of nuclear proliferation and in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as in the strengthening of international cooperation in nuclear safety, radiological protection and waste management. The European Union wishes to offer a number of comments on some of these activities, beginning with the achievements of the international community in the field of non-proliferation.

The European Union welcomes the historic decision taken by the General Assembly in September to adopt the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we consider to be one of the most significant nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures concluded

by the international community to date. For the European Union, this Treaty represents the implementation of commitments entered into in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and as most recently outlined in the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to that Treaty.

The European Union welcomes the fact that already in the first six weeks since the Treaty was opened for signature, 129 Member States have demonstrated the importance they attach to this instrument by signing the Treaty. The European Union calls on all States to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date. The establishment of a Preparatory Commission for the CTBT organization later this year in Vienna will open the way for the necessary preparatory work to commence to give effect to the Treaty. We expect that there will the closest possible cooperation and the minimum of duplication between the IAEA and the CTBT Organization in the fields of administrative and logistical support in the interest of both efficiency and cost effectiveness. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty is not the end of a process. Further systematic and progressive efforts leading to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are called for. The European Union urges the Conference on Disarmament, also pursuant to the Principles and Objectives agreed to at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, to proceed to negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, a so-called cut-off convention. We call on the Conference to activate without delay the ad hoc committee for which the mandate had already been agreed early in 1995.

Last year the Union welcomed the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the decision on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. Further progress has since been achieved on the path to universality of the NPT. We once more appeal to the remaining States, and particularly those among them that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, to accede to the Treaty at the earliest possible date and to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

The European Union welcomes the safeguards statement for 1995 and the secretariat's notice that it had not found any indication that nuclear material which has been placed under safeguards was diverted for any military purpose or for purposes unknown, or that safeguarded facilities, equipment or non-nuclear material were misused.

We are, however, concerned at the report of the obstacles which continue to be placed in the Agency's path as it attempts to carry out its assigned task of verifying the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Delays in the implementation of this verification may have a critical effect on the Agency's ability to conclude that there has been no diversion of nuclear material in the DPRK. We urge the DPRK to comply with its safeguards commitments.

In respect of Iraq, we note the conclusion of the safeguards implementation report that, as of 31 December 1995, there was no indication of a need to change the Agency's assessment that Iraq's practical capability to manufacture nuclear weapons had been destroyed, removed or rendered harmless. In the light of Iraq's failure in the past to comply with Security Council resolutions, the European Union urges the secretariat to continue to exercise vigilance in this matter. In this context, while noting the more constructive approach adopted over the past 12 months by Iraq towards the Agency, the European Union expresses concern at Iraq's failure on 7 July 1996 to provide immediate access to the Agency's action team and its previous withholding from the Agency of information about its nuclear weapons programme in violation of its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, and, in this context, stresses the need for Iraq to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve the remaining inconsistency concerning the full, final and complete declaration in achieving the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

While such matters continue to give us cause for concern in the context of non-proliferation goals, other positive developments have occurred in the past year, notably in respect of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The European Union considers such zones based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned as important complementary instruments to the NPT.

The European Union therefore welcomes the signature on 11 April 1996 of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing an African nuclear-weapon-free zone; and the signing of the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of

Rarotonga, on 25 March 1996, by France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union welcomes the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Union supports this project and urges the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to pursue their objective in a way that recognizes general principles of international law. The European Union welcomes the steady consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first Treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a large inhabited region of the world.

In the Middle East, the European Union continues to support efforts for the early establishment by the States in the region of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We call upon all States directly concerned to overcome existing difficulties and to take the requisite steps for the implementation of a mutually and effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

Accession by regional States, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East, to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, would contribute to confidence that nuclear programmes in these regions were exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The European Union confirms once again its strong support for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system and its full commitment to Programme 93+2. The experience of recent years has demonstrated the need for a vigorous approach to verification. The increased risk of detection is itself a major deterrent to potential proliferators.

In our view, the adoption of adequate new measures will significantly increase the IAEA's capability to build as complete a picture as possible of a State's nuclear activities and thereby increase the capability of the Agency to detect undeclared nuclear activities, in accordance with the Decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

We are already working with the Agency on the implementation of part I measures, while in respect of part II we will continue to participate actively in the committee assigned to draft a model protocol at the earliest possible date. We will continue to make every effort to bring the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date.

Nuclear export control measures are useful instruments for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It must be clearly understood that the right enshrined in article IV of the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is to be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of the Treaty. Thus, far from being an obstacle to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear-related export controls are the necessary corollary of peaceful nuclear cooperation.

The European Union, which has endorsed the guidelines in matters of nuclear exports published by the Agency in the INFCIRC/254 series, calls on all exporting countries which have not yet done so to accept these guidelines and to establish an effective national mechanism for export control. The principles and objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 state that nuclear-related export controls should be promoted within the framework of dialogue and cooperation among all interested States parties. The European Union has been actively following up this issue with others.

In relation to illicit trafficking, the European Union welcomes the programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material agreed upon by the participants in the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security of April 1996. We call on all Governments to implement this programme, and we hope that it will lead to increased cooperation among Governments in all aspects of prevention, detection, exchange of information, investigation and prosecution in cases of illicit trafficking.

Physical protection of nuclear material is one of the key elements in the fight against illicit trafficking. The European Union reiterates its call to all States that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear material under an effective protection system, in accordance with international guidelines. The European Union further calls on all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

We note with satisfaction the work done by the parties concerned on guidelines for the management of civil plutonium, which would constitute an important complement to the Moscow Nuclear Summit Declaration on the safe and effective management of weapons fissile material designated as no longer required for defence purposes, *inter alia*, through the Nuclear Suppliers Group

controls on the traffic in nuclear materials, which would be safely stored, protected and placed under IAEA safeguards.

Technical cooperation is the area of Agency activity of most direct relevance to many members of the IAEA. The scale of the European Union's contribution across the range of Agency cooperation activities reflects the importance which we believe targeted assistance can have in economic and social development in those countries. Fully one third of Technical Cooperation Fund resources in 1995 came from the European Union.

The tenth anniversary of the tragic accident at Chernobyl provided an opportune moment for the IAEA, the European Commission and the World Health Organization to organize a conference to review the consequences of the accident and the lessons that have been learned. Its conclusions, as well as other relevant information, will serve as a factual basis for decisions about future work and collaboration.

The European Union welcomes the decision of the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security to provide international assistance to Ukraine. The Union is committed to providing financial aid to assist Ukraine in improving nuclear safety and security. We look forward to Ukraine's fulfilment of its commitment to close the old Chernobyl installations by the year 2000 at the latest. The Moscow Summit highlighted progress to date and it reinforced the importance of international partnership in addressing nuclear safety concerns.

The European Union has taken a leading role in the strengthening of regulatory regimes, including in the establishment of the nuclear safety account, administered by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the G 24 coordinating mechanism, the European Union's Poland-Hungary Aid for the Reconstruction of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programmes, the European Atomic Energy Community loan facility, coordinated support from the international financial institutions for the energy sector, and bilateral cooperation projects.

While recognizing that primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with national Governments, the European Union welcomes the initiatives taken by the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and mutual assistance and its continuing work in fostering a global nuclear safety culture, and recognizes its contribution to future work under the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which is a major accomplishment in this field.

We congratulate the IAEA on its preparedness to undertake work on limiting the effects of a nuclear accident, should one occur.

Radioactive waste management issues are increasingly important to the public perception of nuclear safety and have become a matter for closer international cooperation. In this connection, the elaboration of a draft convention is well under way and we look forward to the conclusion of a convention in 1997 that will oblige countries to manage their waste properly so as to avoid unacceptable risks now or in the future to both the public and the environment.

On the prospects for ensuring an effective nuclear liability regime providing adequate and equitable compensation to victims in the event of a nuclear accident, we welcome the progress made in discussions on the revision of the 1960 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage. In particular, we wish to see further efforts at concluding the provisions on guarantees. We remain concerned that vital safety improvements remain to be undertaken in certain States.

At a time of financial stringency in both national administrations and international organizations, we acknowledge the valuable assistance provided by extrabudgetary contributions from certain Governments. However, prompt payment of assessed contributions by all member States of the Agency would immediately improve the Agency's financial situation and permit a greater degree of stability and forward planning in its activities. We urge all members to forward promptly and in full their assessed contributions to the regular budget.

The European Union wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Director General and his staff, who have shown dedication and commitment in concentrating on priority activities and by applying rigorous standards throughout the Organization.

In conclusion, the European Union supports the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.9 which has just been introduced by the representative of Canada and expresses the wish that the General Assembly will adopt it.

Mr. Syargeeu (Belarus)(*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus has carefully studied the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the period under review and notes with satisfaction the highly professional level of its preparation. We are grateful to the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for having presented the report to the General Assembly. In the 40 years that have elapsed since the adoption of the IAEA Statute, the Agency has contributed substantially to the development and implementation of international machinery to strengthen security and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Belarus, as a State that strictly adheres to the principles of non-proliferation, attaches special significance to that area of the Agency's activities. Now that it is independent, Belarus is taking meaningful steps to achieve non-nuclear status. It has ratified the START Treaty, acceded as a non-nuclear State to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is another major landmark. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus signed that Treaty on 24 September 1996, the very first day it was open for signature.

Belarus values the efforts of the IAEA to promote the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. With the signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba, the entire southern hemisphere has become a single nuclear-weapon-free zone. In our view, this should lead to similar steps by the countries of the northern hemisphere.

An important contribution to the process of nuclear non-proliferation is being made by Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, on whose territories 3,400 nuclear missiles were deployed until recently. The last strategic nuclear missiles will leave the territory of Belarus before the end of this year, thus freeing the entire area of Central and Eastern Europe of nuclear weapons.

In this connection, the initiative by Belarus to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe is important and timely. The implementation of that initiative would assist the process of nuclear disarmament, help to prevent the renewal of nuclear confrontation in Europe, consolidate the existing non-nuclear obligations of States in the region, forestall the possibility of the further geographical spread of weapons of mass destruction, and enhance confidence among States.

The term "zone" is designed to give flexibility to this idea and attract potential participants and interested States to discuss it. We believe that such a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be based on a harmonious combination of the legal and political, multilateral and unilateral obligations of States. Both our nearest neighbours, linking their security to membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which have a special position with regard to the nuclear arms of the alliance, and neutral countries could be participants in this endeavour. Members of NATO, which have a special position with regard to the nuclear arms of the alliance, could also join the zone to one degree or another.

This idea should not be regarded simply as a countermeasure to the plans to extend NATO. It is not designed to block such plans but rather to help find solutions towards the establishment of pan-European security and strengthening of international security in general. It takes into account the interests of all European States and security structures. Belarus intends to move gradually towards that goal, bearing in mind the strategic interests of the countries involved and guided by the desire to avoid damaging security and stability on the European continent.

We support IAEA efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the safeguards system, and we intend to comply strictly with the obligations we have entered into in this area. With the direct participation of the United States, Sweden and Japan, as well as with Agency coordination, Belarus has taken the first steps towards establishing a State system of verification and control of nuclear materials. In this connection, we express our gratitude to the Governments of those countries for their assistance.

Belarus welcomes the steps taken by the IAEA to strengthen the existing safeguards system under its Programme 93+2. We are sure that in the future the IAEA will play a key role in strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Belarus also notes the significant work done by the Agency in the sphere of international law and standards. We refer in particular to the adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the work under way on the revised Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and a convention on radioactive waste management. In this regard, we would point out that Belarus has already begun the procedure to accede to the Vienna Convention

on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Joint Protocol.

Illicit trafficking in nuclear material can be a serious threat to the security of States. In this connection, the programme of action in this area agreed on at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit is particularly timely. We also note the proposals made by the Russian Federation for a convention to combat acts of nuclear terrorism, which is now being discussed in the Sixth Committee.

This year, the world community commemorated with sorrow the tenth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. That accident not only had a negative impact on the development of nuclear energy, as mentioned by Mr. Blix, it also affected the health of millions of people. Today, nearly two million people live in the contaminated area of Belarus, including approximately 500,000 children. According to the most modest estimates, the economic and material damage done to Belarus by that accident is equivalent to 32 of the Republic's annual budgets, or US$ 235 billion.

Belarus is profoundly grateful to the European Community, the IAEA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others for their contribution to the convening of international meetings devoted to the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster and which were held at Geneva, Minsk, Vienna and Kiev.

The participants in the Minsk meeting concluded that the significant increase in thyroid cancer among children and young persons in the affected countries — of whom there are more than 1,000 altogether — was caused by the radioactive effect of the Chernobyl disaster. At the present time, new kinds of oncological illnesses are appearing. The international meetings reaffirmed the large scale of the Chernobyl tragedy and the long-term nature of its consequences as well as the need to increase international cooperation in assisting the populations affected, the importance of continued scientific research in this area, and the need to move on from research to concrete projects.

The delegation of Belarus is certain that the United Nations and the IAEA will utilize the results of those meetings in their practical activities, as was mentioned by the representative of the European Union. Belarus is grateful to the United Nations for the work it has done to find a solution to the Chernobyl problem. We are also seriously concerned at the fact that against the background of discussions now under way on the closing of the Chernobyl installation less attention is now being paid to the problem of eliminating the medical and ecological consequences of the disaster. In this connection, we would draw the attention of delegations to two important initiatives put forward by Belarus at the Vienna conference on Chernobyl, namely, the establishment of a single international centre to deal with Chernobyl-connected problems, which would unite the efforts being made by scientists from various countries who are doing research in this area, and the need to set up a fund to protect our planet, which might receive a percentage of the income of nuclear engineering and energy companies, using the funds to eliminate the consequences of nuclear disasters and carry out important ecological programmes. We hope that the United Nations and the IAEA will show understanding and support for these ideas.

Belarus is convinced that we will soon arrive at and agree on a United Nations strategy on further expansion of international cooperation with regard to Chernobyl in the second post-disaster decade, with the active participation of the IAEA.

One of the most important areas of activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is technical cooperation. We note the practical significance of the recommendations of the third seminar on policies for technical cooperation, and in particular the positive role that the IAEA is playing as coordinator in strengthening the infrastructure for ensuring radiation and nuclear safety in the new, independent States. We support the recent initiative taken by the Agency to render additional technical support as part of the programme of regional cooperation for 1997-1998. The Agency should in future continue to show a flexible approach to the organization of technical cooperation to those countries, bearing in mind their national interests.

In this connection, the Government of Belarus is counting on the support of the IAEA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and interested States in the Polessky State Radiation and Ecological Preserve, which deals with scientific research on the impact of ionization on the environment. Highly qualified specialists at this facility are preparing a number of concrete scientific projects whose realization will need international financial support. In this connection, we would like to request that support be given to these

projects, which are of scientific and practical value for the entire international community.

In conclusion, the delegation of Belarus wishes to express its appreciation for the work done by the Agency in 1995 and supports the priority areas for its future activities. We also hope that there will be close cooperation with the Agency in solving all problems pertaining to the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic):* Kuwait bases its support for the work of the IAEA on the peaceful uses of atomic energy on its belief in the importance of the role and responsibility of the Agency. The Agency will not be able to succeed in its endeavours without the cooperation and support of the international community.

Kuwait and the other countries that aspire to peace, security, and stability will never relinquish their dream of freeing this beautiful planet from all weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological. This hope has emerged as a result of Kuwait's realization of the terrible danger posed by these lethal weapons, which threaten present and future generations and jeopardize the stability to which we all aspire. That dream will not be realized unless we use nuclear energy in a rational way.

Kuwait associates itself with those who call for using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and economic development, particularly in view of the tremendous technological developments we have witnessed in the use of this energy. We wish to express our satisfaction at the report of the IAEA on the progress made in evaluating the technical and economic feasibility of using nuclear power to desalinate the sea and to generate electricity, while ensuring nuclear safety through a safeguards system.

The peaceful use of nuclear energy will dispel the anxiety and apprehension we feel as a result of the negative consequences of the abuse of this energy, and allay our fears concerning radioactive emissions and their resulting risks to health and to the international environment as a whole.

The Government of Kuwait is following with interest the international efforts to prohibit the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it expresses its satisfaction at the fact that the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) resulted in the Treaty's indefinite extension. We also welcome the adoption by the General Assembly last September of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in the hope that this will be a prelude to complete and comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Kuwait is pleased to have been one of the first countries to sign the CTBT on 24 September 1996. We hope that circumstances will be conducive to its speedy entry into force.

Kuwait also attaches great importance to the activities of the Agency in guaranteeing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons or their use for military purposes. We believe that one of the Agency's most important activities is the strict application of the safeguards system, which aims to prevent the diversion of nuclear energy for military use. We support enhancing the system and closing its loopholes, which, regrettably, have revealed that the system is very easy to breach, as indicated in the report of the Agency.

The process of limiting nuclear armaments requires, as I indicated at the beginning of my statement, concerted international efforts in order to seriously and in a practical manner work towards that objective.

The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon free zone in Africa are but two examples of the practical application of the principle of limiting nuclear armaments and of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We hope to see the day when the Middle East region will also be free from nuclear weapons. However, Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to subject its nuclear installations to the safeguards of the Agency constitutes a major obstacle to the realization of this objective.

We salute the efforts made by the Director General of the Agency to realize this endeavour. We call upon him to continue his consultations with the Middle East countries to facilitate an early application of the full scope of the safeguards on all nuclear activities, so that the Middle East region can be free from all weapons of mass destruction, including non-nuclear weapons.

We reaffirm our full support for the efforts of the Agency and for those of the teams of inspectors. We call on them to continue their constant verification and monitoring activities in Iraq. We also hope that, with the effective participation of the Agency and the Member

States, the export-import mechanism approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1051 (1996), which prohibits Iraq from acquiring any items for the development of its nuclear capability for non-peaceful purposes, will be implemented.

Kuwait also attaches great importance to the efforts made by the Special Commission in charge of ridding the area of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the efforts made by international inspectors to ensure that Iraq does not acquire such weapons. Kuwait would therefore like to express its complete support of the efforts made by the Special Commission, led by Ambassador Ekeus.

When Kuwait speaks fear of the spread of nuclear weapons, we are speaking from ongoing experience. Thus, Kuwait calls on the international community to make a concerted effort to use nuclear energy to create a world that enjoys peace not anxiety, development not wars or destruction. We believe in the relationship of peace and stability with development, and we believe that this energy that we are endowed with should be used for the prosperity of all the peoples of the world.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): At the outset, I wish to recall that my delegation associates itself with the statement presented earlier by Ireland on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore now address only those issues which the Czech Republic considers of particular importance.

For the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 1997 will be a year of profound evaluation of what has been achieved and what might have been done even better in the course of its 40 years of existence. In our view, positive results predominate both in the area of safeguards and in that of promotional activities. Let me review some of the major events which have taken place since the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The international nuclear-energy community, and ultimately non-nuclear States as well, have been marked by a cornerstone event, the recent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Concluding the Convention and opening it for signature at the thirty-eighth session of the IAEA General Conference in 1994 were two major steps towards reaching the highest possible safety of nuclear power plants all over the world. The Czech Republic calls upon all Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention. Only the widest possible adherence to it will allow us to obtain the objectives of the Convention.

Nuclear safety includes safety of radioactive waste management. Czech experts participate in the work of the open-ended group preparing the text of a draft convention which will deal with this very sensitive issue. Concluding a convention on safety of radioactive waste management is a priority for us, and we believe that the discussions in the group will lead to a compromise text that could be submitted to a diplomatic conference in the near future.

The Czech Republic also views with satisfaction developments in the area of thwarting illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radiation resources. We welcome the establishment of the IAEA database of incidents in this field. It is a very useful source of information which assists Member States in identifying suppliers and potential recipients and in combating illegal cross-border transfers.

We are pleased that in the process of revising the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage experts have managed to narrow their differences and have made remarkable progress towards finalizing its update. We would like to witness similar progress in negotiations concerning a convention on supplementary funding in the near future.

The Czech Republic has always attached very high importance to the role of the IAEA in safeguarding nuclear facilities worldwide in accordance with its mandate under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, we too have realized that the present system of safeguards does not enable the Agency to detect possible clandestine and undeclared nuclear activities. It needs to be modified and strengthened. We confirm once again our commitment to the work of the drafting committee on the protocol supplementary to the safeguards agreements. The Czech Republic will do what it can to contribute to the earliest possible finalization of the text, which should become an instrument for the more effective and efficient implementation of safeguards.

The statute of the IAEA gives it a mandate to promote the use of nuclear energy in all human activities for exclusively peaceful purposes. The Czech Republic fully recognizes the importance for many States of IAEA technical assistance and cooperation programmes and commends the Agency for its efforts. We have never been a recipient country of this type of technical assistance, yet we have always both fulfilled our pledges to the Voluntary Fund for technical cooperation and paid our contributions to the regular budget in full and in

time. This is the right way to deal with the financial difficulties of the IAEA and to enable the Agency to carry out all its tasks. When considering technical cooperation and assistance for Member States for the next period, the IAEA should take into account their financial discipline as well.

Despite all its efforts, the IAEA remains unable to verify the initial declaration of nuclear material made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; that country is still not in full compliance with its safeguards agreement. Although some progress has been made, the Czech Republic continues to appeal to the DPRK to provide the Agency with all the information necessary to verify the correctness and completeness of the declaration, to allow access by inspectors to all installations which are to be subject to safeguards and to assist the IAEA in its deliberations.

We also regret the circumstances in Iraq which have made it difficult for IAEA inspectors to continue their monitoring and verification activities outside Baghdad. The Czech Republic fully supports the Agency in its continuous efforts to investigate all aspects of Iraq's past nuclear weapons programme and to analyse the documentation gained, and it calls upon Iraq to cooperate with the Agency in resolving remaining inconsistencies.

In conclusion, I wish to express once again my delegation's appreciation and support for the work of the Agency. My delegation recommends the adoption of the draft resolution concerning the IAEA.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the report submitted to the General Assembly on its activities for 1995, as contained in document A/51/307. We also wish to thank the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for his statement this morning and for the additional information it provided on the work of the Agency during the past year.

The annual review by the General Assembly of the report of the IAEA reflects the ongoing interest of Member States in the role played by the Agency and in its activities, which involve both strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and providing technical cooperation and assistance to countries, particularly developing ones, in connection with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

This post-cold-war period has been characterized by the adoption of significant measures in the field of disarmament, including the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which my country supported and signed. The Agency, as an instrument for nuclear non-proliferation, thus has a vital role to play in strengthening these measures, and others that remain to be adopted, in order to rid the world of its arsenals of terror, particularly those of nuclear weapons.

Likewise, we support the programme to strengthen the Agency's efficiency and to improve the effectiveness of its safeguards system — a programme that is commonly known as 93 + 2. However desirable this may be, we believe that the implementation of this programme should take into account certain basic principles, in particular the need for balance between States' new commitments and their fundamental sovereignty. It is also necessary to ensure that this programme does not entail additional costs, which would lead to an excessive increase in the contributions of States. In this connection, we believe that the nuclear-weapon States should assume the bulk of the costs of the implementation of the proposed new measures. Lastly, the application of the 93 + 2 programme should be consistent with the principle of universality.

The goal of achieving universality for the IAEA safeguards system should be the subject of constant and resolute efforts by the entire international community, the IAEA included. In the Middle East, Israel's nuclear capability still remains outside international control, presenting a constant threat to the security of other States and preventing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. We would like here to reiterate our appeal to Israel, the only State in the region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to adhere to it and to place its nuclear installations under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. This would allow the creation of a denuclearized zone in the Middle East and would, in turn, strengthen the confidence of the States of the region in one another. Such confidence is required for the achievement of lasting peace. The zone would be complementary to the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, since peace and security on the African continent and in the Middle East are interdependent and closely connected.

Another, no less important aspect of the work of the Agency concerns technical assistance and cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of the developing countries. Given its importance to the

economic and social development of these countries, the peaceful use of nuclear technology should be encouraged and strengthened. In addition, the relevant technology should be transferred in order to hasten the development of the countries of the South and by the foundation for sustainable development throughout the world. Such development is synonymous with security in the broadest sense of the term. Among the many civilian areas in which nuclear energy can be used are those involving hydrogeology, the desalination of sea water and studies on the use of small and medium-sized reactors, which can be adapted to the needs of developing countries, including Tunisia.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has a crucial role to play in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We welcome the measures and decisions the Agency has adopted to strengthen its activities in this field. We emphasize the need to ensure adequate financing for the Agency's programmes in the field of technical cooperation, and believe that the Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation established within the Agency should seek ways of further strengthening this cooperation.

Before concluding, I should like to emphasize the importance of improving representation by the various regions of the world within the Agency's organs. The regions of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia remain under-represented on the IAEA's Board of Governors. The time has come to enlarge the Board in order to include other States from these regions, so as to enhance the representativeness of the Agency and strengthen its credibility and its universality.

Mr. Baltov (Bulgaria): My delegation shares the views set forward earlier in the statement of the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. Let me also commend the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the secretariat of the Agency for the work done, as reflected in the annual report for 1995 and in the comprehensive introductory statement of Mr. Hans Blix. We hope that the annual draft resolution that has been submitted affirming confidence in the role of the IAEA will be particularly helpful for the Agency to accomplish the important tasks ahead, in conformity with its statutory functions.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is undoubtedly an achievement of truly historic proportions. Bulgaria took a constructive role, within the Conference on Disarmament, in the CTBT negotiation process. In conformity with its long-standing policies in favour of nuclear arms control and disarmament, Bulgaria signed the Treaty on the very first day it was opened for signature here in New York. We believe that the CTBT will strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and will contribute to nuclear disarmament. We join the call for all States to become parties to the CTBT so that the Treaty may enter into force at the earliest possible date, thus banning all nuclear test explosions in all environments forever.

We believe that the location in Vienna of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will facilitate maximum cooperation and minimum duplication in their work.

Another important step on the security ladder is the speedy conclusion of the so-called cut-off convention by the Conference on Disarmament. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to activate its Ad Hoc Committee, mandated last year to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Bulgaria supports an early start of negotiations on this issue.

As reflected in the introductory statement on the activities of the IAEA, 1996 features a number of important international agreements. First of all, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, fostering a global nuclear-safety culture, entered into force on 24 October and, as a State already party to the Convention, Bulgaria looks forward to its early implementation. On another track, the preparation of the convention on safety of radioactive waste management is advancing well. The work on the revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage seems to have reached a stage forecasting its completion in the not-so-distant future. Given the importance of the broadest possible participation in the future revised Vienna Convention, we favour the so-called phasing-in approach with regard to operators' civil liabilities as a major incentive to meet this objective. We also consider that the revision process should not be decoupled from the elaboration of the complementary funding system.

Bulgaria welcomes the important contribution of the IAEA and States Members to nuclear non-proliferation through the implementation of part 1 and through the

speeding up of endeavours to finalize a model protocol for implementation of part 2 measures of Programme "93 + 2". We regard these measures as pertinent to assuring the non-existence of undeclared nuclear activities. They will enhance the capability of the Agency in conformity with the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

National export-control measures in the nuclear field are instrumental for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a member of the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Bulgaria supports the view that the right enshrined in article IV of the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is to be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of the Treaty.

Proper handling of the problems related to illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources also remains high on the international community's agenda. Recognizing that the primary responsibility in this field is at the national level, we welcome the growing importance of international cooperation between the States Members and the role of the IAEA in facilitating it. The programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material adopted by the participants at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security of April 1996 is expected to enhance cooperation among Governments in all relevant fields, thus deterring illicit trafficking. We are also pleased to note that the consolidated database established by the Agency in this area is already operational.

The IAEA's 1995 annual report clearly demonstrates that the Agency continues to play a vital role in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in fostering global peace and security as provided for in its statute and relevant international instruments. We also welcome the encouraging 1995 safeguards statement of the Agency. Bulgaria reiterates its resolve to further fulfil its obligations in this field.

We note with satisfaction that, as regards technical cooperation, the overall increase in programme delivery in 1995 resulted in the high implementation rate of 75.7 per cent. We would like to commend in particular the increase in model projects, fellowships, scientific visits and participation in training courses. These networking activities broaden the principal objective of technical cooperation to enhance social and economic goals.

The IAEA's activities with regard to nuclear power and the fuel cycle, as well as nuclear and radiation safety, are of great importance for the development of nuclear power and for the safe operation of nuclear facilities. As a country operating WWER-type power reactors, we are particularly interested in the work of the Agency in this field. We are grateful for the Agency's practical assistance in improving the safety of our Kozloduy nuclear-power plant units and in strengthening the Bulgarian Nuclear Safety Authority.

The Bulgarian Government and our national Nuclear Safety Authority have demonstrated a responsible approach to nuclear safety by taking all necessary measures for the safe operation of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. A programme for the reconstruction, safety upgrading and backfitting of Kozloduy nuclear power plant units 1 to 4 has been developed and is now being implemented in cooperation with the IAEA, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Westinghouse, Siemens, and the Kurchatov Institute.

Nuclear power is playing and will continue to play an important role in satisfying national energy demands. In 1995 46.4 per cent of Bulgaria's total electricity production was of nuclear origin.

The Republic of Bulgaria's Strategy for Energy Development during the period 1995-2010 and beyond, until the year 2020, has also been approved by the Council of Ministers and the relevant parliamentary commissions. This Strategy's goal is to establish an optimal ratio between the different energy resources. The present diversification of energy resources meets this objective. However, there is no alternative to the expansion of nuclear-power electricity-generating sources after the year 2010, according to this Strategy.

Together with the development of nuclear power, Bulgaria continues to pay active attention to the application of nuclear methods and techniques in medicine, agriculture and industry.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my Government's support for the Agency's activities. We are confident that, under the able leadership of its Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, it will meet its new challenges, as he and previous speakers have pointed out. Bulgaria is determined to be a reliable partner of the Agency in these endeavours.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): My delegation has supported the adoption of a draft resolution under this item for many years, and we are grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his report on the activities of the Agency. It provides a good overview of the important issues currently on the Agency's agenda. We see the Agency as playing an extremely important role in many issues, from fostering research into the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In carrying out this diverse range of functions, the IAEA is a model of efficiency and effectiveness. As in previous years, New Zealand therefore fully supports the adoption of the relevant draft resolution, and is pleased to have once again been able to co-sponsor it.

This year has also marked a milestone in New Zealand's relationship with the Agency. At this year's General Conference in September, New Zealand took a seat on the Agency's Board of Governors. It is the first time my country has been represented on the Board. We sought election in recognition of the fact that the Agency's non-proliferation and other activities are of increasing relevance to all countries, including countries such as New Zealand, without major nuclear industries. We are especially grateful to our colleagues in our regional group, the South-East Asia and Pacific group, for their support for our candidature, and we look forward to working closely with other members of the Board on the important issues addressed by the Agency.

For those reasons, the Agency is now more than ever before a focus for New Zealand. It seems to us an important time in the history of the Agency. Even the most cursory examination of the Director General's report would highlight the crucial role the Agency is playing in some of the key issues that the international community is attempting to address. I should like to outline some of the areas to which New Zealand attaches considerable importance.

We believe that the IAEA will have an important role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We expect that the Agency will work closely with the provisional technical secretariat soon to be established in Vienna. My delegation believes that there will be many opportunities for cooperation between these two organizations in both the administrative and technical areas. Much can be learned from the IAEA's experience over the last 40 years. However, we expect that the benefits of cooperation will flow both ways, and that many synergies will be found.

The Assembly will recall the importance New Zealand attached to the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The end of nuclear testing in our region provided one of this year's highlights for my country. However, the long-held concerns of New Zealand and other members of the South Pacific Forum regarding the potential environmental effects of nuclear testing remain. In this context, New Zealand commends the Agency for its support of the international advisory committee's study of the radiological situation at Mururoa and Fangatau atolls. We hope that this study will provide answers about the effects of past nuclear testing.

Another issue of direct concern to my region is the shipment of nuclear material through the South Pacific. New Zealand and the other countries in the region agree that these shipments should be carried out in accordance with the highest international safety standards. We endorse the Agency's intention to keep the regulations under review to ensure that they remain abreast of scientific and technological developments. A successful conclusion to the negotiations on a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management will further reinforce high safety standards. We also believe that negotiations on a convention on liability for nuclear damage should be speedily concluded, and that the convention should include environmental damage within its scope.

The Agency is also closely involved in efforts to resolve tension in two areas of great concern to my country. New Zealand has welcomed the Agency's effective implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq, and calls upon that country to cooperate fully with the Agency's teams. We also support the Agency's efforts to implement the binding safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and urge that country's authorities to return to full compliance with its provisions. New Zealand's membership in the Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is designed in part to encourage moves in that direction.

These two experiences give ample evidence that the issue of non-proliferation is not an academic one. They also underscore the need for effective safeguards. For these reasons, my delegation would like to single out the Agency's programme to strengthen the safeguards system — among the Agency's wide range of important activities — as being particularly crucial. The experience in Iraq has demonstrated that traditional safeguards are

not sufficient in themselves to provide full confidence in the non-proliferation system. It is now essential that additional measures be adopted to guard against the risk of clandestine nuclear activities.

New Zealand accordingly strongly supports Programme 93 + 2, which has been developed to address this problem. We welcome the measures that the Agency has already been able to adopt under its existing authority, but it is clear that further, complementary measures will also be needed to achieve a credible and effective system. The capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities is fundamental to the credibility of the Agency and to effective safeguards. Indeed, it is a precondition for a non-proliferation regime in which we can all have faith and confidence.

My delegation understands that the IAEA's committee on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system has just completed its second meeting. We appreciate the progress that has been made towards drafting a model protocol to enhance existing safeguards agreements. We urge the IAEA and Member States to make every effort to bring this process to an early and successful conclusion.

Truly effective safeguards are an essential complement to the CTBT and will provide a foundation for further nuclear disarmament measures. The additional measures in the model protocol will be directly relevant to the implementation of a cut-off convention. In short, New Zealand — and, we believe, the whole international community — is looking to the Agency for the final completion of this important and urgent task.

To underscore the importance we attach to this issue, my delegation notes that strengthened and effective safeguards are fundamental to the operation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The indefinite extension of the Treaty in 1995 was a major advance in nuclear non-proliferation. Next year will see the start of the enhanced NPT review process, to which my country attaches considerable importance. From the perspective of the IAEA, it is clear what is expected. I quote from the Principles and Objectives adopted at last year's Review Conference:

> "International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards should be regularly assessed and evaluated. Decisions adopted by its Board of Governors (...) should be supported and implemented and the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities should be increased." *(NPT/Conf.1995/32 (Part I, annex, para. 11)*

But the Agency's involvement in the NPT review process does not stop at developing enhanced safeguards. Once again, the secretariat of the Agency and Member States will be examining the implementation of articles III and IV of the Treaty. My delegation looks forward to cooperating with other Members in the three-year review process, culminating in the next Review Conference in the year 2000.

It is clear that the activities of the Agency are relevant to all countries, not just to those with nuclear industries. New Zealand looks forward to playing its part in ensuring the continuing effectiveness of the Agency.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the detailed and balanced report on the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since the issuance of its 1995 annual report (GC(40)/8), just introduced by the IAEA Director General, Mr. Hans Blix.

During the past year, important progress has been achieved in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in my country and in the international community. At the domestic level, the national Government, owing to radical economic reforms, has made progress in the far-reaching process of bilateral cooperation with countries committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In this connection, Argentine corporations are finalizing the construction of a third reactor for research on and the production of radioisotopes, contracted for by a friendly country.

In addition, the Argentine Atomic Energy Commission, which has half a century of experience, has initiated the final phase of the design of a modern, modular low-power reactor with a high degree of safety. This reactor could be used to generate electric power for cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants or for the desalination of sea water. Argentina is firmly prepared to share this technology with interested countries that have a firm policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

With regard to Argentina's relations with the Agency, I wish to stress that we are continuing to provide complete support for technical cooperation activities. My country provides the IAEA with technical experts for specific cooperation projects with other

countries. In addition, we offer regular training and education courses for interns from other member States of the IAEA.

We believe it is necessary for member States of the IAEA to make voluntary contributions in order to implement fully the Agency's technical cooperation programme. In this context, we would like to stress the importance for national economies of regional programmes for the development of nuclear energy.

Accordingly, my Government consistently supports the programme established under the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL). We congratulate the secretariat of the Agency for its important efforts in recent months, in cooperation with the countries of the region, aimed at updating and modernizing that programme.

In addition, within the regional framework, we continue to strengthen the work of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). In this context, I should like to refer to resolution C/E/res.27, which was adopted by that organization, and which promotes cooperation and consultation between members of the various nuclear-weapon-free zones.

With respect to the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, we have initiated work with the secretariat of the Agency with a view to implementing part 1 of Programme "93 + 2" in Argentine nuclear installations. We urge States participating in the intergovernmental committee to finalize negotiations on part 2 of that programme. Completion would make it possible to improve the current safeguards system by providing the Agency with better instruments to prevent or detect possible deviations from the non-proliferation system.

In this context, and in order to ensure that such modernization is effective, we believe it essential for the new safeguards system to be universal in application and, accordingly, completely independent of what kind of agreements countries have with the Agency.

My country wishes to express its profound satisfaction at the recent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. In this respect, the national executive authority has initiated procedures so that Congress can ratify the Convention.

With regard to the IAEA Standing Committee on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Argentine Government welcomes the results achieved at the most recent meeting on the negotiation of a draft protocol on additional financing of a universal nature. We hope that this process will lead to the convening of a diplomatic conference in 1997.

We are also following with particular interest the initiatives of the international community with regard to the transport of radioactive waste by sea, and we believe that the adoption by the International Maritime Organization of a code on the safe transport of irradiated nuclear material, plutonium and highly radioactive waste is an important first step to safeguard the interests of coastal States.

Finally, I wish to reiterate my congratulations to the Director General of the IAEA, who we believe is one of the most important personalities in the system, and, through him, to the entire staff of the secretariat of the Agency for their well-known professionalism, which has been manifested in the important results achieved by the International Atomic Energy Agency in the past year.

Mr. González Gálvez (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour and a pleasure to express, on behalf of the delegation of Mexico, our appreciation to Mr. Blix for the report on the work done last year by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which he leads so brilliantly and competently. Again, we congratulate him and reiterate our support and appreciation.

Although we understand that Mr. Blix has decided not to stand for re-election as Director Agency of the Agency, my Government wishes to thank him in particular for his work on the development of the reactors at Laguna Verde and for a series of projects on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as well as for his firm support for the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America. We wish to thank him, in his capacity as an official and as a colleague, for his contribution to the cause of peace, to which we are all committed.

The detailed report of the work carried out by the Agency in the different areas of its mandate gives us a clear picture of the valuable efforts made in the fields of nuclear-generated electricity and the use of nuclear technology for human health, agriculture, food and environmental protection, and the progress achieved with

regard to technical cooperation and nuclear and radiological safety.

Mexico supports the work of the Agency in carrying out its important mandate and advocates balance, which we consider essential, between its security activities and those for cooperation and technical assistance. We attach particular importance to all aspects of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, of which the international safeguards regime is an essential element. We are particularly pleased with the recent signing of the Treaties of Bangkok and Pelindaba, which establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Africa. We hope that the Treaty of Bangkok will resolve the current problems with regard to the delimitation of that zone and its interpretation by certain nuclear Powers in that area.

We also welcome the progress achieved in strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, such as the establishment of an open-ended committee to draft a protocol for the implementation of the measures of Programme "93 + 2", which require additional authority and complementary judicial powers, such as broader access to information and the expansion of physical access.These measures should, of course, be consistent with the rights and constitutions of States.

Mexico's desire to participate actively in strengthening the safeguards system was emphasized in a formal offer to hold in our country field trials for the measures contained in part 2 of Programme "93 + 2".

For the time being, the voluntary offer provides neither a binding commitment nor any precedent for the implementation of the safeguards the IAEA is carrying out in Mexican territory by virtue of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With Mexico's ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety on 26 July 1996, the necessary number of ratifications was reached for the Convention's entry force, just four days ago. Mexico has thereby reiterated its lasting commitment to the objectives of the IAEA and its interest in attaining its goals in connection with nuclear safety. Since the process has already been launched in the IAEA, the Board of Governors should be enlarged to enhance its representativeness and effectiveness.

There should also be greater clarity with regard to criteria for the appointment of member States to the Board. Account should be taken of progress made by member States in a specific geographical area — in terms of the percentage of energy produced from nuclear sources, for example. Mexico welcomes the progress made in the preparatory work on the Convention on Nuclear Safety and in the management of radioactive waste. At the same time, we would like to express our Government's great interest in promoting work on the implementation of the Convention, which should enjoy broad adherence and international consensus on general security principles. Moreover, the Convention should be applied to all kinds of radioactive waste, irrespective of its origin, and guarantee the protection of human health and the environment.

Mexico welcomes the progress made in the review of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the preparation of a convention on additional compensation which woudl help strengthen the international regime on liability for nuclear damage.

Lastly, my delegation allies itself with the support expressed by the European Union for the adoption of measures to enhance the Agency's capacity to detect undeclared nuclear activities. In this connection, Mexico welcomes the establishment of the committee to draft an additional protocol to the safeguards agreements that most States have already agreed to on a bilateral basis with the IAEA. In this way, one of the main goals of the Agency can be achieved: a strengthened, efficient and universal safeguards system.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy are increasingly diverse and important for development. In Mexico's opinion, the IAEA should step up and expand cooperation and assistance so that we can all benefit from science and technology. At the same time, the growing number of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the achievements in nuclear disarmament, which we hope will continue and progress, will mean new and more important obligations for the International Atomic Energy Agency in terms of nuclear safety. The international community's recognition of and confidence in the role played by the Agency led the Conference on Disarmament, with Mexico's resolute support, to recommend that the Agency cooperate with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in areas where the IAEA has a comparative advantage. Its experience will be an important factor in strengthening an effective system to verify a complete ban on nuclear test explosions.

The Agency headed by Mr. Blix is dynamic and solvent and undoubtedly have to cope, as it has thus far, with the challenge of growing responsibilities and limited

resources. Its representativeness and effectiveness must be increased, as should the transparency of its decision-making processes, and its security and cooperation activities must be better balanced. We have confidence in the International Atomic Energy Agency; we have confidence in its Director General.

Mr. Mazilu (Romania): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his clear and concise introduction of the annual report, which stressed the main achievements and trends of the activity of the Agency over the last year.

My delegation fully shares the assessments and proposals contained in this report. We would like to underscore the significant contribution of the Director General to the achievement of the goals laid down in the Agency's statute and in the pertinent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

My delegation endorses the views expressed on this report by the delegation of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries.

At the same time, my delegation would like to make the following comments on some specific issues. First, as the Assembly knows, my country is actively participating in the ongoing efforts for the wider peaceful use of atomic energy, as well in the world community's *démarches* towards the promotion of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the basic precondition for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Secondly, I have the honour to inform the Assembly that in April 1996, my country inaugurated the first unit of the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant. By mid-October 1996, the unit reached the planned parameters. We would like to stress that the functioning of this Power Plant highlights our very fruitful cooperation with companies from Canada, Italy and the United States, as well as the qualified technical assistance received from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My Government is aware of its huge responsibility regarding the safe functioning of this power plant. We have already envisaged the necessary steps for environmental protection that should accompany its functioning.

Thirdly, we appreciate the technical assistance and cooperation programme undertaken by the Agency. It has to be emphasized that technical cooperation is the Agency's *most directly relevant area of activity to many of its* members. We welcome, in particular, those initiatives undertaken by the Agency to strengthen the Technical Cooperation Programme and to make it more effective and more relevant to sustainable development. Technical cooperation should focus on improvements in management, such as the systematic assessment of the status of radiation safety in member States and the planning of time-limited follow-up activities. It is the view of my delegation that the Standing Advisory Committee on Technical Cooperation should make the necessary recommendation on means to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Technical Cooperation Programme.

My country expresses hope in the future maintenance of the level of technical assistance by the Agency, with a view to answering the pressing needs of the development of its nuclear programme. On its part, Romania can support the Agency's cooperation programmes by offering the knowledge and experience of many Romanian experts who are ready to work within the framework of activities carried out by the IAEA.

Fourthly, bearing in mind the major aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy for the benefit of our country's economic and social development, we would once more like to stress that our country is supporting the Agency's measures for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, within the context of the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Likewise, we are determined to further apply in good faith the measures contained in Programme 93 + 2. We also consider that the adoption of a model protocol additional to the comprehensive safeguards agreements would be of great importance to the strengthening of the IAEA's system of verification of nuclear materials and installations, as well as of other related items. From this perspective, we share the opinion that this new proposed additional protocol should be a balanced document, acceptable to all parties. Furthermore, we think that the urgent adoption of this legal instrument would represent a new significant step towards the consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Fifthly, our country firmly supports the measures taken by the Agency to improve the safe operation of nuclear plants and storage of radioactive waste. We would like to commend the Agency for the intense

activity it has carried out in this area, as well as in the field of preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

The tenth anniversary of the tragic accident at Chernobyl provided an opportune moment for the Agency to review the consequences of the accident and the lessons that have been learned. It is the view of my Government that the Agency should take further necessary steps to prevent similar accidents in the future, bearing in mind the tragic lesson of Chernobyl.

We would like to emphasize the importance of international cooperation and partnership in addressing nuclear safety concerns. We welcome the measures taken by the European Union for the strengthening of regulatory regimes, including the establishment of a nuclear safety account. We also consider it appropriate to put into effect bilateral cooperation projects in this field.

There is no doubt that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with national Governments. At the same time, we welcome the initiatives taken by the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and mutual assistance, and its continuing work in fostering a global nuclear safety culture. We appreciate that the Convention on Nuclear Safety is a major accomplishment of the Agency in this field. This legal instrument binds countries to basic principles covering the regulation, management and operation of land-based civil nuclear power plants. It is our hope that as many countries as possible will ratify this Convention as soon as possible. My Government considers that all should be done at the national and international levels not only to limit the effects of nuclear accidents, but to prevent them completely and to guarantee the safe operation of every nuclear plant.

Regarding radioactive waste management, my Government appreciates the efforts made to formulate a draft convention, which should stipulate clear responsibilities in this field in order to avoid unacceptable public and environmental risks now and in the future. It is necessary to establish an effective nuclear liability regime, providing adequate and equitable compensation to victims in the event of a nuclear accident. At the last session of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage, broad agreement was achieved on the revision of the Vienna Convention and important conclusions were reached on supplementary funding. We fully share the view expressed by other Member States that all necessary steps should be taken to strengthen the international nuclear liability regime.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the full support of my Government for promoting the Agency's programmes and activities as noted in the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration.

Mr. Tonishi (Japan): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Hans Blix, for his comprehensive and clear introduction of the Agency's report, on which I would like to make some remarks.

First of all, I note with satisfaction that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by the General Assembly with the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States. I welcome the adoption of the Treaty as a historic step towards nuclear disarmament. It is hoped that, with its accumulated expertise in the field of nuclear safeguards, the IAEA will assist the CTBT Organization, which is to be located in Vienna, in its efforts to implement the Treaty effectively.

Progress has been achieved based on the Framework Agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This includes the conclusion in December last year of the Agreement between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK on the supply of a light-water reactor project and six on-site surveys carried out by KEDO. Japan calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to adhere strictly to the Framework Agreement and strongly urges it to implement fully the safeguards agreement with the IAEA in order to dispel the concerns of the international community. My Government continues to commend and support the Director General and his staff for their consistent and impartial efforts to implement the safeguards agreement between the IAEA and the DPRK, including their efforts to monitor the freeze of specified facilities, as requested by the Security Council.

The experiences of the IAEA illustrated the need to strengthen further its safeguards system. The Agency has already begun to address this need, but it is particularly important that it improve its ability to detect undeclared nuclear-development activities. Japan supports Programme "93+2", which seeks to formulate measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. My Government, with the aim of ensuring the full and early implementation of this Programme, will continue to take an active part in the

work of the committee as it drafts a model additional protocol to the current safeguards agreement.

With regard to nuclear safety, the entry into force on 24 October of this year of the Convention on Nuclear Safety is truly an epoch-making development. Japan is hopeful that this Convention will ensure a high level of safety in the use of nuclear power throughout the world and appeals to all States to become parties to it. In this connection, Japan will continue to contribute to an early agreement in the ongoing discussions for a convention on the safety of radioactive-waste management.

It is significant that at the Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security, which was held in Moscow in April of this year, the leaders of the G-7 nations and the Russian Federation not only confirmed the main principles relating to the safety of nuclear power, but also affirmed the importance of international cooperation in the field of nuclear safety. As a means of building upon the achievements of the Summit in the context of the Asian region, where countries are pursuing the introduction of nuclear-power generation, Japan is preparing to convene the Tokyo conference on nuclear safety in Asia in the early part of November this year.

Japan attaches great importance to the multilateral technical cooperation activities of the Agency and has actively contributed both human and financial resources to them. It will continue to provide as much support as possible to help develop and improve human resources, skills and technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The IAEA plays an essential and expanding role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. I would like to emphasize, in conclusion, that the degree to which the Agency is successful depends ultimately upon the firm support of Member States. Japan, for its part, is determined to continue to do its best to further develop this important organization.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to commend Mr. Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his informative statement. His personal efforts and dedication, as well as those of the IAEA Secretariat, in pursuance of its objectives for peaceful uses of nuclear technology throughout the world, in accordance with its statute, have always been appreciated by my country.

My delegation has reviewed the annual report of the IAEA for 1995. We are pleased to see that the Agency continues to make progress on its mandated objectives and duties. I take this opportunity to comment on some of the issues mentioned in the report.

First, on the technical cooperation programme of the Agency, my delegation reiterates the importance and validity of this aspect of IAEA duties and the need to enhance it in an efficient manner. The IAEA role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology in different areas, ranging from agriculture to medicine, needs the attention and support of all members of the Agency. There is a need for the Agency to focus further on meeting the developing countries' requirements and needs for peaceful utilization of nuclear technology, especially in the energy sector. It is our view that the activities of the IAEA in other areas should not adversely affect the operation of the technical cooperation programme and that resources should be allocated evenly among different programmes of the Agency.

Secondly, my delegation welcomes the continued efforts by the Member States in negotiations to agree on a protocol on strengthening the safeguard regime. Iran, as an original signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has always adhered to the Agency's safeguards, has pursued an open and transparent policy in this respect and will continue to support the effectiveness of the safeguard regime.

We believe the strengthened safeguard system should enhance international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Furthermore, the protocol should not be limited only to those countries that already have full-scope safeguard agreements with the Agency. To address the concerns of the international community and achieve its stated objectives, the protocol should serve as an independent instrument which commits all States parties to the NPT on an equal footing. Hence, the nuclear-weapon States should be equally committed to the protocol.

Thirdly, on the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones, I would like to recall that despite more than 20 years of discussions and resolutions on the subject, the Middle Eastern countries have yet to agree on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region. This is due mainly to Israel's refusal — with the full support of certain Powers — to join the NPT and place its facilities under IAEA safeguards.

Iran believes that establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world is of the utmost importance and, for its part, would spare no effort in promoting this concept in all parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East. The continued operation of unsafeguarded and non-peaceful nuclear reactors in Israel is a source of grave concern to the international community in general and to the Middle East region in particular. As long as the Powers behind Israel do not give up their double-standard attitude and continue their self-serving policy of ignoring Israel's refusal to join the NPT and have its facilities placed under IAEA safeguards, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will remain a distant goal. My country, which initiated the proposal for establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 1974, is prepared to support any genuine and practical plan for its realization.

My delegation notes the developments in the discussions on the revision of article VI of the Agency's Statute. It is a fact that certain regions do not enjoy adequate representation in the IAEA's main decision-making body. This issue has been discussed in the Agency over the past 20 years without any concrete results. Given the political realities in the world and the three-fold increase in the Agency's membership, we hope that an agreement on this issue might be reached by the next session of the Agency's General Conference.

With regard to the classification of member States in regional groups, it is our deep conviction that the grouping of member States should be consistent with the determination to see continued progress in the work of the Agency and should not be seen as a self-serving policy of some member States without due regard for the political realities of the regions. While supporting the right of every member State to be represented on the IAEA Board of Governors, it is our firm belief that member States that desire to do so should not represent any region so long as its membership in the region concerned and its representation of the region are not agreed to by the countries that are located in that region. Furthermore, the member States of each region should have the final decision on accepting any new member to the group. This is not an issue that should be forced upon regions.

The last issue I should like to raise concerns the unjustifiable insistence of some nations on the unilateral evaluation and certification of the activities of other members of the Agency. As was reaffirmed in the Declaration of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the IAEA remains the competent authority to verify and assure that the obligations of States Parties to the NPT are being fulfilled and that nothing is done to undermine the authority of the Agency in that regard. My delegation opposes the continued use of unilateral mechanisms for the evaluation, qualification and certification of some member States, since they are not consistent with the letter and spirit of the NPT, the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and they undermine the authority of the IAEA.

I will conclude by reiterating our support for Mr. Blix and the Agency in promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Programme of work

The President took the Chair.

The President: I should like to inform members that the programme of work for the remainder of October and for the month of November was issued this morning as document A/INF/51/3/Rev.1/Add.1. The list of speakers for each of the items listed in that document is now open. I will in due course announce dates for the consideration of other agenda items, and keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes.

Announcement

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 21, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which is scheduled for consideration by the General Assembly on Thursday, 21 November. The President of the General Assembly

has requested His Excellency Mr. Ernst Sucharipa, Permanent Representative of Austria, who so ably coordinated informal consultations during the fiftieth session on draft resolutions under agenda item 21, to assist him in the same capacity at this session, and Ambassador Sucharipa has graciously accepted.

I request those delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under agenda item 21 to do so as early as possible in order to allow time, if need be, for negotiations with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions. In this connection, I should like to inform members that the first meeting of the informal consultations will be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.